



明月千里
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UNDEFEATED
BAHAMUT
CHRONICLE

GA文庫

Novel Illustrations

最弱無敗の
神装機竜

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Character



ルクス・アーカディア

滅亡したアーカディア帝国の王子。
『無敗の最弱』と呼ばれる機竜使い。



リース・シャルテ・アティスマータ

アティスマータ新王国の王女。あか せんき朱の戦姫と呼ばれる。
神装機竜《ティアマト》の使い手。



フィルフィ・アイングラム

アイングラム財閥の次女。ルクスの幼馴染みで学園長の妹。
神装機竜《テュポーン》の使い手。



クルルシファー・エインフォルク

北の大國、ユミル教国からの留学生であるクラスメイト。
神装機竜《ファフニール》の使い手。



アイリ・アーカディア

旧帝国の皇族の生き残り。
一年生で、ルクスの実の妹。



セリスティア・ラルグリス

『シヴァレス騎士団』団長、学園最強の三年生。四大貴族の公爵家
令嬢で、神装機竜《リンドヴルム》の使い手。



切姫夜架

『帝国の凶刃』と呼ばれた暗殺者の少女。ルクスを主と
認め、仕えている。神装機竜《夜刀ノ神》の使い手。



コーラル・エスター

七竜騎聖グライファーの補佐官を務める、ヴァンハイム公国
士官候補生。中性的な出で立ちの美少年。

World

【装甲機竜《ドラグライド》】

遺跡から発掘された、古代兵器。

その中でも希少種であり、高い性能を持つものは、神装機竜と呼ばれる。

また、装甲機竜の使い手は、機竜使い《ドラグナイト》と呼ばれる。

【遺跡《ルイン》】

世界に七つ発見された古代遺跡。装甲機竜《ドラグライド》が発掘されたため、国力を左右する重要な存在として、各國間で縛張り争いが起きている。

【幻神獣《アビス》】

遺跡から現れる謎の幻獣。人類の脅威であり、機竜使いのみが対抗できる。

【終焉神獣《ラグナレク》】

ルイン
ひとつずつ遺跡に対し一匹のみ存在するという、超常の力を秘めた七匹の幻神獣。

【黒き英雄】

正体不明の装甲機竜《ドラグライド》を使い、たった1機で帝国の装甲機竜の約1200機を倒したと言われる伝説の英雄。

【アティスマータ新王国】

リーズシャルテの父であるアティスマータ伯が、アーカディア帝国に対して行ったクーデターによって、五年前に建国された国。

【アーカディア旧帝国】

世界の五分の一を束ねていた大国。世界最強と謳われた、圧倒的な軍事力を背景に圧政を敷いていたが、クーデターによって滅ぼされた。

ルクスとアイリは、この帝国の皇族の生き残り。

【七竜騎聖】

年々高まる幻神獣の脅威に対抗し、世界協定に加盟した各國から選出された、代表の機竜使いたち。

Prologue – Memory of Pledge

In her childhood, Yoruka happened to overhear that the contents of a dream was something that one didn't remember.

Even so, she believed that she was the type who remembered her dream.

She also knew that she didn't see the dream of her deceased little brother at all.

「—Nice to meet you. How do you feel waking up, oh captured princess?」

「.....」

- Blink*, Yoruka was awakened with those words.

A few months ago—at the underground of a ruined building on a solitary island without any name near Ries Island, there was such a strange space there.

It was a cubicle that was called a ^{Cocoon} Pod.

The container where she was put in that looked like a large coffin made from metal.

A thick forest could be seen from the room's window. Yoruka recalled that she was being confined in this uninhabited place that was like a penal colony.

She surrendered to Arcadia Empire and exchanged a master and servant contract with the Old Empire.

And then, the strange three-dimensional image that was projected before her.

A girl clad in a dangerous atmosphere, possessing asymmetrically colored eyes and silver hair.

「My name is Hayes. Your savior who awakened you from those guys.」

The girl said that she had connections with the Arcadia Empire that had already been destroyed, but she wasn't directly involved with them.

After the girl revealed her identity like that, she explained to her simply the way to use the facility.

This island was under the management of a noble called Dobar, and in a few days he would show his face to give orders to Yoruka.

After that, one of Yoruka's eyes was strengthened with a surgical procedure that was accompanied with agony called Baptism, and she continued training in that facility.

After she slept here due to the Old Empire's hand, she understood that several years had passed while her memory and body were preserved as they were.

And then—about how the bloodline of the Arcadia Empire that she should serve still hadn't gone extinct.

「I'll leave for a while after this. —But, before that, there is one thing I want to ask.」

The girl in the three dimensional image who introduced herself as Hayes asked her with a fearless smile.

「Why didn't you let go of that thing even while sleeping? Did you want to kill someone? Or perhaps you were scared of being defenseless?」

She was sleeping naked, but it was only the Sword Device of Yato no Kami that she didn't let go from her hand even while sleeping.

She couldn't think of any particular reason about why she did that.

But, she understood instinctually.

She was branded with the mark of a failure as the princess of the nation of Koto and as a human, but it was only her talent in battle that was recognized and granted her strength.

This was the only thing she could lean on, what herself who didn't possess anything could feel attachment to.

「It's neither.」

That was why, Yoruka told her true feeling towards that girl in the three dimensional image.

Most likely, this was her only love that no one would be able to understand.

That this was the only thing that she could feel pleased about when she held no interest towards human and unable to feel concern for them.

Till the end, she didn't understand why her little brother tried to save her who was abandoned as something inhuman.

Was it pity due to the blood they shared as siblings?

Or perhaps, was it because of her value as a combat force?

Either was fine.

「—No, this is something necessary for me, so I can be me.」

Yoruka smiled without hesitation. The girl in the three dimensional image grinned widely and erased the image.

After that Yoruka trained alone waiting for her turn until the man called Dobar appeared on the island.

And then, when she displayed her strength to Dobar who finally arrived, he secretly formed a plan and brought her to Ries Island without informing Hayes.

After that she encountered Airi in the Ark and reached this point of time.

When her little brother who approached her with a human heart and hope died, Yoruka's emotions were completely unmoved.

Even when she knew that the Old Empire was destroyed, it didn't change.

Lux was treating her as a human, and he was also acting considerate of her with her Academy life.

But, while she was happy of her master's feelings, she also felt how she didn't have anything to repay him.

She who wasn't a human had nothing of equivalent value that she could give as repayment for their feelings.

「This time for sure, I will accomplish my duty as a tool without fail.」

—And then, in the present.

Within the Academy's ground, in the practice ground at midnight.

Yoruka who was wearing Yato no Kami talked to herself while looking up at the moon.

Unprecedented danger and fate were still approaching Lux.

She who was unable to save her little brother and the Old Empire from ruin would finally be able to accomplish her long-cherished desire.

She would kill the enemy as Lux's sword. If her body broke protecting him, then her mission would end.

「—I won't commit a failure for a second time, Aruji-sama.」

A gentle smile was surfacing on the lips of the girl who was hiding such resolve in her heart.

Episode 1 – Out of Season Transfer Student

Part 1

「And because of that, although this is a special exception for only this time, he will be the second male transfer student. It will be for two weeks from here on. Everyone, get along with him.」

Instructor Raigree's solemn voice resounded calmly.

- Murmur murmur*, a bewildered and surprised stir that had never happened before was filling the classroom in the morning.

The infiltration and investigation in Heiburg that was covered up as a honeymoon with Philuffy.

Furthermore the conquering of the first Ruin Babel in the port city Triport located at the western territory of the New Kingdom. After those events had the curtain closed on them, Lux returned to his life in Academy after so long.

Also, due to the damage from the battle in Heiburg where he used Over Limit, he was told by the doctor to take a rest without wearing a Drag-Ride for a while.

His girl classmates were getting excited due to the surprising happening that would make anyone open their eyes wide in shock.

「Eerr, because of that I will be in the care of everyone for a while. I am Coral Esther, the aide of the Vanheim Principality's Seven Dragon Paladin. Best regards.」

A young man with beautiful features possessing characteristic light green hair

that was braided and an androgynous look.

When he smiled, shouts of joy 'KYAAAAAH!' thundered inside the classroom.

—

「Heey, his atmosphere is different from Lux-kun, but he is also nice isn't he?」

「He was the person from the Vanheim Principality who became a butler at the campus festival right? He is a very dreamy person.」

「Should I aim at him I wonder? The competition for our prince has already intensified too much, I cannot make any move anyway.」

「I'm firmly in the Lux-kun faction though. Besides, he will be here for only two weeks. He also won't be able to stay for that event—」

—

「—You all are noisy. It's fine even if you all don't treat him specially while we are in the Academy, but don't be lacking in manner.」

Raigree immediately chided everyone and calmed down the situation, but the atmosphere of the classroom was still excited.

It was an event where a boy from an allied country transferred in temporarily to experience enrolling in the academy.

And then, if that young man was also someone with beautiful features that were neck to neck with Lux, then it couldn't be helped that everyone got excited like this.

Lux was also surprised by this situation. He was staring at it while smiling wryly.

For Lux who was the only boy in the Academy until now, he also felt somewhat complicated, but as expected the members of Syvalles inside the class were calm.

Lisha was folding her arm looking as though it was only a trivial happening, and Krulcifer was also smiling with composure. Philuffy was falling in a doze sleepily, while Tillfur looked like she was having fun.

「Then, I want to assign a new seat, but if you have hope for where—」

「Ah, yes.」

Prompted by the instructor, Coral looked over the classroom.

Then, his gaze met Lux's right away.

Because recently Coral was helping with the defense of the New Kingdom and the like, he should have been acquainted quite a bit with the members of Syvalles too, but as expected it seemed he was inclined to Lux who was of the same gender.

「Hmm. You will be enrolled here for around two weeks only anyway. Perhaps it will be easier like that. Lux Arcadia, will you look after him?」

「Err, if he is alright with me, then with pleasure.」

Of course Lux also had no reason to refuse.

After he readily accepted, Coral sat on the seat prepared beside Lux and he gave Lux a natural smile.

「Thank you. I'm happy that I can be in the same class as Lux-kun.」

In the end it should be a normal greeting between fellow males, but when Coral with his face that looked like a girl was saying that to him, for some reason his heart skipped a beat.

The girl classmates who saw that were incomprehensibly getting heated up for some reason.

「Ooohh? Geez Lux-chi, don't tell me you are okay with a boy too?」

「Wait, what are you saying Tillfur!?」

When Lux was flustered by Tillfur's teasing, Raigree sighed while starting the lesson.

「Ahaha. I don't really understand but, please go easy on me.」

Even while smiling wryly, Coral matched the mood of Lux and the others.

Krulcifer was staring at such sight with her usual composed gaze, while Lisha was staring with a slightly dissatisfied expression.

Lux returned a smile back at Coral, then he straightened his back and nodded.

The students of the Academy thought that the student transfer this time was a mere cultural exchange event.

But the members of Syvalles knew that there was deep meaning and situation behind it.

Part 2

The other day, a world summit was held once more.

A war council was opened in the royal capital of the New Kingdom under the form of the leaders and the Seven Dragon Paladins from all the countries being separated from each other and talked among their respective groups.

Lux participated in spite of his exhaustion and injury. Three people from the Lords joined and had a dialogue with the representatives.

「The capture of Babel this time, it's truly a great step. With this we have taken one more step forward on the path towards Avalon.」



The Ragnarok of Babel—Metatron was destroyed in Triport, and the Grand Force was successfully put in the deepest part of the Ruin.

And then, in the next week, the full force of the other Seven Dragon Paladins were focused in the conquering, and under the presence of the Lords, they splendidly completed the capture of the Dungeon, the Ruin within the territory of the Vanheim Principality. Such report had been sent.

The participants in that event were the Blackend Kingdom that was led by Singlen, the Vanheim Principality that was led by Greifer, and the Turkimes Confederation that was led by Soffice, those three countries.

Because that achievement was done by the cooperation of the three countries, the accomplishment was shared between the three of them.

It seemed that on that side they were also forced into a very hard fight against the Ragnarok as their opponent and they received considerable damage, but they took care of it safely.

With this— four of the seven Ruins had been conquered and there were only three remaining.

The Garden, the Hall, and then the Moon, which whereabouts was still unknown.

In regards to the world destruction that would be brought forth by the Sacred Eclipse in three more months, it could be thought that the matter, although it couldn't be called as ideal, but it was still progressing favorably—but,

「Unfortunately, I believe everyone won't be able to act in this coming month. Therefore, in reality we almost have no extension of time to reach until Avalon.」

The Lord—

The survivor of the imperial family of the ancient era, the first imperial princess of the Holy Arcadia Empire, Listelka Rei Ashalia.

Her silver hair and grey eyes, and then her body that was clad in a pure white dress made her look like an ephemeral girl. When she spoke those words with a tense expression, a faint agitation was running around the fourteen Seven

Dragon Paladins and their aides.

「It's just what I want if you are giving us a break, but in the end, will we make it in time like that? There ain't any guarantee that we will conquer the remaining Ruins smoothly yeah?」

The one who said that was a young man who had characteristic bristled blond hair and gave the impression of being peeved.

Greifer of the Vanheim Principality unusually spoke out his opinion.

Lux was basically feeling the same doubt, but Krulcifer who was attending as the aide from the Ymir Theocracy was quietly speaking the heart of the matter.

「Even if we want to open the Ruin and summon the Ragnarok, we don't have enough 『keys』 correct?」

With that sentence several people in that place suddenly realized it. Listelka spoke the reason once more.

「To say it simply, that's right. After a ^{Key's Supervisor} Xfer unlocks an important facility, they will lose their interference ability towards the Ruins for a while. They will recover after about a month, that's why everyone will be forced to standby for a month from here.」

「.....」

The other day Krulcifer used her authority as a Xfer in Babel, while the maid Mishis from the side of the Lord did the same in Dungeon.

Thus, at present, it was impossible to open the door that connected to the deepest part of a Ruin.

They were forced to a standstill even in a situation where they had no extension of time remaining.

「Is it impossible to destroy the door or wall and forcefully open the closed path?」

Lux's aide, Celis asked her question frankly.

She pointed out that even if the important facility of a Ruin was locked with a

solid wall, if they used the ability of a Divine Drag-Ride's Divine Raiment at full power, there was a possibility they could breakthrough.

But, Listelka shook her head quietly.

「That's not possible.Or rather, I wish to tell this to everyone once again, I want the destruction of the facility that cannot be entered and devices that cannot be used without a Xfer's authority to stop.」

The reason was because, in the first place, the wall or door was created from alloy that was hard to destroy even with the power of a Drag-Ride.

When the Ruin recognized that it was being exposed to a strong attack, for a few months the pedestal at the deepest part of the Ruin would become unable to accept a Grand Force.

Naturally if that happened, the path to Avalon would also be closed.

Thus, in this chance a strict order was given that conquering a Ruin by destroying a place where a Xfer's authority was required would be considered as something prohibited that could even be called as treason.

「Theen, are you telling us to fold our hands and just watch for a month from now? It's fine for me because I can take it easy thouugh.」

When the talk was almost concluded like that, the Seven Dragon Paladins of the Heiburg Republic, Rosa Granhide interrupted.

She was injured in the middle of conquering a Ruin. Her broken arm was suspended with cloth and she was walking using a cane, even so she didn't show any sign of frailty in the slightest and wrapped herself with an overwhelmingly overbearing atmosphere.

By the way—Rosa wasn't reported as a traitor.

After the case in Babel, Lux consulted the captain of the Seven Dragon Paladins, Magialca, and it was decided that the matter of Rosa's betrayal wouldn't be prosecuted and she would be made to continue as a Seven Dragon Paladin.

It was because Rosa Granhide was only used as a scapegoat by the true King of Vices—Calensia who threatened and brainwashed Rosa, making her

misdeeds and infamy as the cover for herself.

「Of course, I will have to talk about it to the leaders of each country though. Honestly, it will be regrettable to lose one of the Seven Dragon Paladins here, it will be troublesome too if those Lord fellows take revenge and cause chaos. I'll deal with this secretly. You can leave the rest to me.」 Magialca said that to Lux and he abided by her words.

Magialca's aide was dispatched to Heiburg, and the situation there was moving to the direction of the dissolution of the military regime without the King of Vices.

Honestly, it also felt like an intervention in another country's domestic affairs, but in this situation where world destruction was imminent in three months time, he had no motivation to object.

Of course, it would be a different story if Lux opposed that, but he forgave Rosa.

It was a secret matter in the end, so Rosa kept her acting of behaving arrogantly the same as before.

「Of course, we have no leeway of wasting time like this. During this one month where we will be unable to conquer Ruins, I wish for everyone to rest and preserve your battle strength, and also to complete the remaining three tasks.」

The three tasks.

1. The annihilation of the antagonistic mercenary organization, Dragon Marauder.
2. The discovery of the seventh Ruin, the Moon, which whereabouts was unknown.
3. Pinpointing the traitor that existed within the world alliance.

At present, the existence of a traitor like the third task hinted at was uncertain, so there was no prospect about it.

If he was forced to say, then the King of Vices of Heiburg might be applicable for it, but that matter including Rosa's case was taken care of secretly, so by

appearance it was the same as being unable to find the traitor.

「During the one month ahead, please stop conquering the Ruins. In exchange, I promise that the country that accomplished these three tasks will receive rewards like Drag-Rides and the like, and also the blessing of Avalon.」

When Listelka showed the bait once more, several of the Seven Dragon Paladins held their breath.

The promised land that would be opened after the seven Ruins were liberated, Avalon.

The promise of offering resources, treasures, and furthermore technology from the ancient era.

Among those that were useful in conquering the Ruins and accomplished the tasks, the one with most accomplishments would be rewarded with those, and recently the evaluation was taking shape with a point rationing system.

At the present situation, the New Kingdom and the Heiburg Republic that cooperated on the surface to conquer Babel were awarded with ten points for conquering a Ruin. Those points were split between the two countries with a 3:2 ratio.

The Vanheim Principality, the Blackend Kingdom, and Turkimes Confederation that were similarly cooperating to conquer the Dungeon were also given evaluation points.

New kingdom – 6 points, Heiburg Republic – 4 points, Vanheim Republic – 4 points, Blackend Kingdom – 3 points, Turkimes Confederation – 3 points.

That was the end result from the Lord's evaluation.

「By the way, bringing down one of the Dragon Marauder's three division commanders will be rewarded with five points. And I will present ten points as a reward for the country that discovers the Moon or the traitor.」

「.....」

Seeing Listelka who talked with a gentle smile, the Seven Dragon Paladins and their aides fell silent.

This talk was also told to the leaders of each country, so it could be imagined

that they would most likely give the instruction to pursue for the blessings of Avalon later.

Originally, they would want to avoid the structure of each country competing for points, but thinking about the future after the world was protected from ruin, as expected, as the leaders they wouldn't be able to shut their eyes in regards to this.

The conquering of the Ruins this time was carried out peacefully in the shape of two or more countries cooperating with each other, but it was unknown what would happen from here on.

There might be disputes between countries because they were impatient for achievements, and if it went poorly there was even the possibility that some countries would get framed as a traitor.

Thus, one month from here would be a preparation period.

Everyone accepted it as a postponement in order to settle everything in the remaining two months, but—

「And then—there is one more suggestion from me, what do you all think about doing aide exchange at this chance?」

The sentence that Listelka announced in the end caused a small stir to result inside the room.

At the conclusion, that odd proposal was approved at the meeting, and a few days later the countries executed it.

Part 3

「Hmm. So Coral-kun will be here for a while?」

「Hey hey, what kind of work does an aide have to do?」

「If there is anything troubling you, don't be reserved and just ask!」

At lunch break after the morning classes were over.

As expected, Coral was surrounded by female students and he was barraged by questions.

「Good grief, even though a danger is approaching the world, our girls are still like usual.」

Lisha was watching that from afar while gathering Lux, Krulcifer, Philuffy, and Tillfur and began to talk with them casually.

「It can't be helped. There is no way for them as well as the people to know what is currently happening after all.」

「Yep yep. Or rather, Lisha-sama is also too relaxed y'know? This matter is quite the top secret right?」

Krulcifer and Tillfur retorted with their usual atmosphere towards Lisha who was folding her arms in dissatisfaction.

Perhaps Philuffy was still feeling exhausted from the previous deathly battle, she was only blinking her eyes sleepily.

In order to avoid chaos and riots, the world destruction by Sacred Eclipse was only told to a part of the upper echelons, including the members of Syvalles.

And so, this current spectacle should pose no problem, but Coral's existence was concerning.

「The standby period for a month. In order to confirm each other's combat potential and strengthening cooperation using this chance, the aides of the

Seven Dragon Paladins will be exchanged every two weeks for inspection—.

That was the excuse of that so called imperial princess huh.]

Correct.

Coral coming to the Academy as a transfer student wasn't a coincidence.

Due to the 『intermingling and inspection』 suggestion by imperial princess Listelka, Coral came here as an envoy from the Vanheim Principality. Tomorrow, Celis and Krulcifer were also scheduled to depart from the New Kingdom in the early morning.

「Well, that man looks harmless, so there is no need to be that wary though.]

「—Such negligence is forbidden. Lux-kun, if it's you, you already understand the true meaning of that proposal correct?」

Krulcifer immediately denied Lisha's muttering and she whispered that.

Lux nodded slightly and replied back.

「I understand. I believe so—but」

The true objective of exchanging aides between countries.

Rather than for strengthening cooperation between fellow countries, it could be imagined that the aim was for the countries to 『monitor』 each other.

If the aide of another country was accompanying the Seven Dragon Paladin of a country, then that aide would inevitably become able to observe the tendencies of that country.

In short, the imperial princess Listelka herself was cautious of some country stealing a march to stand on top.

Furthermore, in case a country was found out to be hiding something related to Ruin, it was possible that they would be designated as a traitor using that as proof.

The aim of the Lords was till the end to use this chance to crush those uncertain factors.

In the end, Listelka's proposal couldn't be rejected and the leaders made the decision to carry it out in their meeting.

「Well, but it's fine right? We have nothing to hide anyway.....ah」

Tillfur was about to speak casually, but she saw Philuffy and her mouth closed reflexively.

The situation of Philuffy who had the seed of a Ragnarok residing in her body was something that they didn't want another country to know.

「In any case, it would be better to be careful in this one month. You are kind to anyone, but being careless is forbidden. Celis-senpai and I will also be sent to another country after this.」

「—Right. Be careful there, Krulcifer-san.」

「Ah, Lux-kun. Could you show me for a bit where the restroom is? That's, I don't know where the one for boys is—」

At that timing, Coral raised his hand from his seat in the distance.

Lux who saw that immediately walked towards Coral.

「Right. If you are alright with me, I will also show you around the campus later—?」

Coral let out a relieved sigh at Lux's suggestion and he smiled while grasping Lux's hand.

「Thank you, that will be really helpful.....」

As expected, Coral must be tired from getting surrounded by female students during the break.

Lux who had guessed that arranged it so that they could be alone. Coral also understood Lux's consideration for him and he said his gratitude, but—

「I wonder, does he really understand what I told him just now.....」

「To me, it looks like he isn't on his guard or anything while facing an aide from another country.....」

Krulcifer was watching that with a conflicted gaze, while Lisha was also exasperated.

「I wanted to eat lunch, with Lu-chan.」

On the other hand, Philuffy who finally opened her eyes was stuffing her cheeks with a doughnut silently.

「Our Academy is really peaceful somehow isn't it」

Tillfur concluded the talk like that and shrugged her shoulders.

Even with the tense atmosphere from the special situation that was Coral's transfer, the peaceful, ordinary days were still going to start.

Part 4

「You saved me. After all, there was almost no chance to interact with girls at the military academy in Vanheim you see.」

And then the time passed until after school—

Lux was guiding Coral around the Academy's ground.

He started from the school building and practice ground, then to the Drag-Ride atelier, the dining hall, the library, and the Drag-Ride hangar.

Like that he introduced the facilities in general.

If that was all then there would be no problem, but,

—

「Hey hey, those two, aren't they getting along better than expected?」

「That's right. I heard that they often met because of their work, it seems he is one of Lux-kun's few male friends.」

「I thought there would be jealousy but, could it be that this pairing might be possible?」

「Ye-s, the spectators please watch from a distanc-e」

The female students from the first years until the third years who were watching Lux and Coral from a distance were getting led away by Tillfur cheerfully.

The curious onlookers were too many, so he heard from Airi that the Triad were managing them each hour.

「Ahahaha..... This Academy is amazing in various ways. Should I call it unique—」

「I think no one will blame you even if you call it strange here.」

Lux also returned a wry smile to Coral who was making a troubled face.

During times like practical training and the like, Lux would only watch without wearing his Drag-Ride because his exhaustion was still great, but just by doing warm-up exercises with Coral, for some reason the female students would become noisy with shrill voices.

It seemed that a part of the female students would find perversion from the relationship between two handsome young men in spite of the reality.

A single boy in a girl school.

He thought that the ordinary days until now had gradually calmed down, but contrary to expectations, the Academy was becoming noisy in a different meaning.

And then, in addition to that, a giddy air was also flowing through the whole Academy.

「Even so, somehow they are very energetic. Will there be a festival or something soon?」

「Ah.....I see, now that you mention it, it won't be long before that.」

Lux also suddenly remembered something from Coral's words.

Fundamentally it was forbidden to decorate the girl's dormitory, but from not long ago, there were several rooms that were decorated with a circle constructed from the branches of holy olive.

It was a decoration that prayed for repelling evil and bringing happiness.

At this time, Lux would receive several odd job requests to make them.

Recalling that, Lux's cheeks loosened unconsciously.

「It's the Holy Night Festival. The preparation to welcome the end of the year in the New Kingdom will begin soon.」

Part 5

At the same time.

The girls were also forming their strategy while observing that from afar.

And then, at night—in the empty dining hall after dinner was over.

At that place that was specially reserved for an extraordinary meeting, the main members of Syvalles were gathering.

The captain Celis, Lisha, Krulcifer, and Philuffy were naturally there.

Even the members of the Triad, Sharis, Tillfur, and Noct, then Airi and also Yoruka were present along with tea and desserts.

「Gununununu..... What's with that! Even though Lux finally came back from that fake honeymoon, it became hard for us to approach because of that!」

「You're right. The pretext of that person accompanying him as the aide of the Vanheim Principality exists. That is quite the miscalculation on our part.」

「Both of you, please hide your true feelings a little. Please remember that in the end this is a strategy meeting.」

When Airi retorted like that with exasperation,

「Tha, that's right! The topic of this meeting should be about doing information exchange between us before Krulcifer and I depart tomorrow.」

The serious Celis put the situation in order while looking impatient like that. The place calmed down.

「Yes. Putting that aside, it will be the Holy Night Festival soon. It's an event where females will give a present to the male who has helped her the most throughout the year—and after that it will also soon be the Nativity Festival, where the male will present the return gift for that in the third month next year.」

Continuing after Noct who was murmuring matter-of-factly, Sharis and Tillfur were also smiling mischievously.

「I completely thought that we were gathered here for that matter, but I wonder if I'm mistaken?」

「Ain't that right, it feels like it will be really troublesome if we don't have a discussion about it beforehand after all.」

「My? What could this be about?」

「.....」

Everyone present fell silent at Yoruka's question, as though they had something in their mind.

After that, Krulcifer observed the expressions of everyone around while starting to talk with determination.

「It looks like it isn't even a month until the Holy Night Festival, which is a big event in this country, but, in this period where the world might end soon, there is no one who is thinking anything strange, isn't it?」

「.....Wha, what do you mean by strange thing? That's, it's not like I'm planning anything else other than giving a present though—」

After Celis whispered that with a somewhat fretful look, everyone there silently turned a dubious gaze towards her.

「I want to confirm beforehand but, that aforementioned Holy Night Festival, it's not like it's a day for confessing love to someone isn't it? It's only a day for giving a present.」

「O, obviously! After all, it's a tradition that has continued from ancient times, even before the era of the Old Empire. That's, perhaps there is that kind of custom in part of it though.」

「Ye, yes! That's, even if someone gave a present as a symbol of gratitude to another person, there shouldn't be any other intention than that put inside it.....perhaps.」

After Lisha spoke in panic, Celis also added further explanation after her.

Philuffy was looking absentmindedly, but before long she tapped her hand *pon*.

「That's right. A present for Lu-chan, I have to think about it—」

「—!？」

Instantly everyone's body jerked in reaction.

It showed how they were sharing the same reason for uneasiness.

「A present for Aruji-sama? I cannot think of anything that would be fitting for that, so at the very least I'll offer this body direct—」

「That's why, I'm telling you that's completely no good.....」

Seeing Krulcifer who raised her voice unusually, Airi guessed something.

「The world's destruction is imminent, that's why let's not steal a march on each other. That's what this is about isn't it?」

「Stea, stealing a march!? I, it's not like I'm.....」

Lisha's cheeks reddened and she oddly averted her gaze.

But, the Triad, who also guessed Airi's point each added their own opinion.

「Certainly it might be better that way. Of course, we don't know when we will die, so at the least I want to convey my feelings—there is also such feeling though.」

「Yes. But, to do anything that will cause the mind to become unstable until the matter of Avalon is taken care of will be putting the cart before the horse.」

「Everyone's feelings need to be on the same page here. It will be terrible for Lux-chi too if he gets a confession from a lot of people all at once.」

Sharis talked with a deep feeling, then Noct and Tillfur continued after her.

Seeing how everyone other than Philuffy and Yoruka went 'hah' in realization, they must have noticed Airi's intention.

In short, let's not tell our feelings to Lux until the matter came to an end, it was such a discussion for everyone to restrain themselves.

The reason Krulcifer suggested that was because she was also the aide of the

Ymir Theocracy. She was surely being cautious if by any chance she was unable to be present here because of her duty.

Lisha and Celis who noticed that also consented with a tacit understanding.

So to speak, the Holy Night Festival would be a skirmish to gauge their distance with Lux.

When this battle was concluded and the world became peaceful, the Nativity Festival would come right after that.

Until that day, they mustn't advance their relationship with Lux further than the present.

「.....Haa, everyone is really hopeless, but I understand everyone's feelings. About Philuffy-san and Yoruka-san, I will talk with them again later. And so, I will manage the schedule of Nii-san on that day, so can everyone please report to me about your present so that there won't be any overlapping?」

「Oh well, I guess, it will be helpful if you, his little sister, will manage this.」

「I, I get it. I pretty much have decided already what present to give Lux after all.」

「A, acknowledged. That's, I will think about the general idea until tomorrow.」

「What should I give Lu-chan, I wonder.」

「I don't get it about that matter, so I'll concede it to you.」

After Krulcifer, Lisha, Celis, and Philuffy muttered one after another, Yoruka concluded the talk with a carefree smile.

Like that Airi put the girls' wishes in order and then they broke up from that place.

「Good grief, just why do I have to do something like this.」

Airi parted from the Triad while murmuring sulkily.

There was the matter of the other day with Philuffy, so she told her beforehand so that nothing strange would happen because of the instigation of her elder sister, the headmaster Relie.

Airi was able to predict that it would become like this in the near future, but

when the time actually came she felt conflicted.

On the other hand, she also talked about this matter to Yoruka, but she didn't look interested and ignored her.

『It's not necessary. Something like a present for Aruji-sama, what kind of thing that would make him happy, it's something that I don't think I would be able to do anyway—』

Yoruka who didn't understand a human's feelings.

Airi was also convinced by her words, but she also felt something strangely unnatural from her words.

If it was the Yoruka from before, she felt like Yoruka would at least think of a present for form's sake even if it might not make Lux happy.

She thought that after fighting together with the other girls in the previous battles, Yoruka had become able to understand the others to a certain degree, but...

『It will be fine if she isn't thinking of anything bad though.....』

Noticing that she was thinking in consideration like that towards Yoruka, she smiled wryly seeing how without noticing she was starting to think of her as a friend.

Captured by his past and duty, Lux was unable to notice the good will from other people. But even that shackle that was like a curse was gradually getting unbound from his interactions with the girls.

In three more months, even this great battle will be concluded and Lux would be able to take a break from this battle he was immersing himself in.

In other words, for the girls, that time would also be the time to settle victory or defeat.

Part 6

「The Holy Night Festival huh. It's nice that there will be a fun event in the New Kingdom.」

「It was a festival for only nobles in the era of the Old Empire though. Since the country became the New Kingdom, her majesty Queen Rafi turned it into something that is unrelated with one's status.」

「The Queen of this country is a good person isn't she.....」

Lux who had just finished dinner was sorting the books inside the library after the closing time due to the request from the librarian.

His body still hadn't fully recovered, so his chores were also only light work for rehabilitation, but Coral proposed to help.

At first he planned to refuse, but thinking that it was also not a good idea to gather attention from the female students even more than this, he accepted.

「Her highness Princess Milmiette of the Vanheim Principality also doesn't lose right?」

「You're right. It would be great though—if I could also act like that.」

「.....?」

Lux felt something strangely out of place from Coral's words and he tilted his head.

He should be the princess's close associate and a distant relative, but did something weigh him down about it?

「In any case, please take care of me for these two weeks. Though it may be tedious that it's someone like me who came here.」

Coral who put the last book smiled while saying that. Lux immediately shook his head.

「I might have said it before but, I like everyone in the Academy, however I didn't have even a single male friend. I'm happy that Coral came.」

「Ah, that.....thank you, Lux-kun.」

Coral suddenly looked bashful with reddened cheeks.

It was an unusual reaction from him who usually smiled naturally. For some reason even Lux almost got a throbbing heart.

(Wait, what am I thinking! Even though I am indisputably a man—)

Just because the other party had androgynous looks and a slender body, as expected feeling like this would be inexcusable for him.

Though, thinking back, when Coral's skin got seen by Lux at the Vanheim Principality, it felt like at that time he was also acting embarrassed more than necessary—

(No, something like this feels strange because I'm overly conscious of it. We are fellow males, I need to interact with him boldly—) When Lux determined himself like that, a knocking sound came from outside the library.

「Lux-chi, thanks for your work. The bath is already empty right now y'know?」

「Ah, right. Thanks Tillfur. I'll go there right away so—」

Lux replied to the other side of the door and he slowly stood up.

After all the female students finished entering the large public bath, Lux's turn to enter finally came.

Exactly because he had decided that he mustn't get strangely conscious of Coral, Lux intentionally declared.

「The, then Coral. Let's enter together.」

「Eh!? Tha, that's—a bit..... No, I get it!」

Coral's eyes opened wide for a moment in agitation, but then he averted his eyes and nodded.

(Wait, why is even Coral acting embarrassed like this.....?)

Lux was feeling the vaguely awkward atmosphere while heading to the large

public bath.

Part 7

「Say Lux-kun. Right now, I'm looking properly like a boy right?」

While changing in the changing room, Coral asked him like that for some reason. Lux didn't know how he should react.

「O, of course, but, what's the matter?」

「No. It's nothing, though.」

Even while saying that, he averted his eyes from Lux for some reason while taking off his clothes in a way that attempted to hide his body. Because of that he looked strangely bewitching.

However it was odd.

Even though Coral looked undoubtedly like a man, Lux wondered why he looked erotic to him.

He was feeling strangely nervous with his heart pounding hard, but the moment he stepped inside the bathroom, that dubious atmosphere vanished.

「Uwaa.....」

The pillars that were made from marble.

The large public bath that was illuminated by faint orange light felt pleasant no matter how many times he visited it.

Although Coral was also a relative of the princess, it seemed he had never seen a bath this large, because his face burst into a happy smile.

「Somehow, it's amazing. I'm envious that you can enter this kind of bath.」

There was almost no custom to take a bath in the academy of the Vanheim Principality and the bathtubs there were also cramped, so it seemed that it was quite the hardship for Coral to bathe there.

When he soaked inside the bathtub after lightly washing his body, Coral stretched out his limbs delightfully.

「Nn. It's calming. So much so that I want to become a student here.」

「Ahaha, I'll welcome it if Coral came here.」

Lux finally returned to his usual rhythm and he felt relieved in his heart.

His gaze casually moved towards Coral's chest, but as expected he couldn't see anything feminine there at the slightest.

(At that time it felt like he even had proper breasts there though—)

When Coral dressed as a girl in his pursuit of Dragon Marauder, at that time it wasn't just his body, if he remembered right even the color of his hair—

「I heard just now but, in the holy night festival, it seems a boy can receive a present from a girl isn't it? It feels like Lux-kun will receive a lot of presents—」

「Ah, about that, it seems that Airi will manage it for me. She said that it appears the number of present that will come will be more than expected, but I think she is exaggerating.」

「Haa..... Really Lux-kun, even though it will soon be one year that you are staying here, but you still don't understand a girl's feelings.」

Hearing Coral tell him that with an exasperated tone mixed somewhere in his voice caused him to feel like his heart was stabbed deeply.

「I think I'm in agreement with Airi-chan. After all, when I was protecting this place with Greifer while Lux-kun was absent, I saw how popular you are.」

「As expected, it must be because they are considering me as a rare sight here, I think that's all there is to it. After all I'm the only boy here. Besides—」

「Lux-kun. That kind of modesty is called as simple blockheadedness you know?」

Coral got out of the bathtub with a splash and he gathered his light green hair with a towel.

And then he puffed out his cheeks slightly and pointed out.

「They won't pay attention to you for nearly a year just because you are a rare

sight. You are an imperial family member of the Old Empire, and the only boy in the Academy, but everyone is able to receive you properly. I think that's something really amazing, something that you should feel proud about.]

「.....Is, that so.」

If that was the case then he felt happy.

After all he was from the imperial family of the Old Empire that was once oppressing the people.

From his position as an 『enemy』 that was widely imposing the tendency of male chauvinism, to a position where everyone was able to recognize and accept him.

He was finally able to obtain the thing that he had been wishing for all this time.

「By the way, Lux-kun, do you have anyone who you like?」

「—!？」

Lux was bewildered from getting asked that with a tone that sounded teasing, but also sounded somewhat serious.

「Wh, why so suddenly?」

「Isn't it fine? We are fellow males here, I also wanted to try doing this kind of talk. Greifer is obviously devoted to Milmiette-sama after all.」

「.....Even if you ask me that so suddenly, that's—I don't really know.」

「Really? Even though you are getting along so well with those girls.」

Coral questioned with a blushing face from soaking into hot water.

「Certainly everyone is really friendly with me, but that is because of various circumstances. Could it be.....there is such doubt remaining in me.」

「Hmmm. That also means, that you have become properly conscious of them.」

Coral stayed submerged in the bathtub and smiled with a somewhat innocent expression.

「Bu, but it isn't like I said it clearly. Besides, I'm a criminal, there are things that I have to do no matter what—」

「.....Certainly, that might be true.」

After holding his breath slightly, Coral muttered with a meek expression.

「A criminal isn't burdened with just debt, they don't even have the freedom to marry. But, you are recognized by her majesty Queen Raffi and Lizshartesama. You have also become the princess's personal knight, and you have saved the country from danger several times. If you only wish for it, isn't it possible to have that collar removed?」

「—Yes. Perhaps, it's just as Coral said.」

After similarly taking a bit of time to think, Lux also smiled with a lonely look and told his answer.

「But, I still cannot do that. That which I tried to accomplish in the past but was unable to. Until I obtain an answer about it that can convince myself, I—」

It was about the revolution in the Old Empire that ended as a tragedy due to Fugil's betrayal.

Did Lux overlook something, or were the words that his elder brother told him correct?

Perhaps, there was no way to confirm the answer.

Even so—Lux resolved himself to become deeply involved with the New Kingdom once more as a member of the Seven Dragon Paladins and fought together with Lisha and everyone.

With the method that was the same as that time, where he would try to save even the enemy as much as possible.

However, right now he had a lot of comrades who were fighting together with him.

「Perhaps something like an answer in regards to an incident or a mistake that happened in the past doesn't exist. Even so—if I can finish this battle, then perhaps I will be able to feel convinced in my heart. That's what I think.」

There was no way Lux could talk about the particulars of the Black Hero to Coral who was from the Vanhiem Principality.

That was why, he let out a large sigh and smiled after hearing Lux earnestly expressing his feelings to him just now.

「I see. It will be great.....if you can find your answer.」

Coral didn't say that casually, he spoke earnestly while putting his hand on his chest.

It was the smile of someone who understood Lux and sympathized with him.

「—That means, Aruji-sama's relationship with those girls will also progress at the Nativity Festival three months later? After relinquishing that criminal collar too?」

「Right. I don't know how it will become but, if possible I—wait!? Why is Yoruka here!?」

The moment Lux responded to the voice that came from inside the steam, he noticed the girl's presence.

There he saw the figure of the girl exposing her bewitching white skin.

「Huh, eeeeeh!? Wh wh wy, why!?」

Coral spontaneously also leaped back, creating a large splash in the bathtub.

The large public bath at night where there should be only two young men alone, was instantly enveloped with an odd heat.

「My, please don't pay me any mind. I'm only coming here to guard Aruji-sama while also washing his back. Besides—I'm also borrowing the so called water dress from my friend.」

Yoruka said that while making a carefree smile on her face. Indeed, she was wearing a purple water dress and a small dark blue waistcloth.

Although, the exposure rate was slightly greater than her usual clothing or pilot suit as expected. Lux's gaze was naturally absorbed towards her body.

「Not that, what I want to say is—」

「Lux-kun, don't tell me you are always doing something like this.....?」

Coral who was submerged until his shoulder inside the milky white hot water was unusually expressing dissatisfaction.

He was sending him a reproachful gaze with red cheeks from the heat of the hot water.

「Yo, you are wrong! That's, usually even Yoruka won't come until this place—! Yoruka too, you promised not to do anything strange in the Academy right!?」

Lux was justifying himself to Coral who was unusually making a grave expression while chiding Yoruka who was circling her hands around his neck.

But, the girl didn't look guilty as usual and spoke out a shocking thing.

「Protecting the safety of Aruji-sama is my natural duty as a servant. Especially when there is an unknown fellow staying by your side, that's all the more true—」

「Eh—?」

Lux was taken aback by the words and gaze of Yoruka that were filled with significance.

Her blue and purple eyes, the asymmetrically colored eyes were obviously looking at Coral.

「Those words, do you mean to say that I'm going to do something to Lux-kun?」

「Forgive me for my slowness. My name is Kirihime Yoruka. The loyal servant and tool of Aruji-sama—that is all there is to my existence.」

Yoruka didn't answer Coral's question and introduced herself to him.

She was telling the young man in front of her that she had no intention at all to get along with him.

「I, I know. This is the first time I'm talking properly with you but, you are just like the rumors aren't you? More importantly, I don't know if I should be the one to say this but, it's not good you know, something like this.」

Coral averted his face as though he recalled the situation they were in and

calmly offered his candid advice.

‘I don’t know if I should be the one to say this’, Lux was curious about those words, but he didn’t understand what Coral meant by that.

After all, there should be no problem for him to enter with Coral, unlike Yoruka. Did he refer to his standing as a transfer student from a foreign country?

While Lux was tilting his head in puzzlement at that,

「Is that so? But, you are in no position that allows you to say such thing I believe.」

「No I, based on the general common sense—」

「Actually, I am doubtful.」

While the steam was covering each other’s body, Yoruka interrupted like that with a carefree smile.

「You have been getting involved too much with Aruji-sama since some time ago. And then you appear conveniently too many times around Aruji-sama. It is as though you are monitoring Aruji-sama’s situation—」

When Yoruka said that, Lux was taken aback by a sudden awareness in his heart.

Coral himself was receiving such missions from the Vanheim Principality, but indeed the number of times he came into contact with Lux was a lot.

And then the aide exchange this time that was due to the proposal of the Lords, this event in itself was implicitly about fellow Seven Dragon Paladins, and also fellow countries checking each other in place.

「.....It’s a coincidence. Besides I have no intention at all to trick and betray him.」

「Then, there is no problem even if I am by Aruji-sama’s side. I am Aruji-sama’s tool, so there is no reason for me to do anything unnecessary without his order.」

Coral calmly objected, but Yoruka too kept smiling without yielding.

(What's with this situation.....)

The elusive Yoruka who stuck with her unique sense of value at all times, and the calm Coral who was sensible and social.

The two of them were mostly the polar opposites of each other in personality, but for them to become involved and confront each other like this...

Furthermore, it was in the bath.

「Besides from my point of view, I don't wish for the likes of you who are a man to stay by Aruji-sama's side. Time and chance are not something infinite. With you taking Aruji-sama's time means that is also how much the other girls will lose the chance to produce a successor with Aruji-sama.」

「Wai-, what are you saying Yoruka!?」

Lux raised his voice in panic also because the image of Syvalles' members immediately came to mind when he heard her mention 'the other girls'.

But, Coral didn't even show any sign of caring about it and puffed out his cheeks slightly.

「I don't really want to say this but, I think you are being bothersome to Lux-kun you know?」

「My, that is not true. Isn't that right, Aruji-sama?」

「.....Wait, the talk moved towards me!?」

While Lux was dumbfounded, the talk was suddenly thrown at him from the two and he became flustered.

This was troubling.

Coral was in the right based from what they were saying, but Yoruka herself was thinking about Lux's well being in her own way, so he was also reluctant to bluntly rebuke her.

Because she was also not mistaken in a sense with what she was saying.

「Excuse me, Nii-san. Did you happen to see Yoruka-san? After she suddenly talked about a water dress just now, she suddenly went outsi—! Eh.....the door?」

The moment Lux was stiffened, Airi appeared and she seemed to think it odd that the door to the large public bath was opened. She peeked inside while tilting her head in confusion.

And then she saw Lux, Yoruka, and Coral, and she stiffened.

「Thi, this is, Airi! There is a deep circumstance about this—」

「Please come to my room after Nii-san finished bathing. I have something important to talk about with Nii-san.」

Airi smiled with a shadow covering her eyes. She told him that with a wide smiling face.

「O, okay.....」

The door was slowly closed. After that, the place was ruled by a heavy silence.

「That's, sorry, about various things somewhat.」

「She will understand if she is reasoned with. Then Aruji-sama, if you like I can directly explain to your younger sister—」

「It might be useless if it's not me who talks to her. That's, can I get out now?」

Lux replied to Coral and Yoruka each while getting out of the bathtub.

The month of rest period that suddenly happened and Coral's transfer.

The ordinary days that should be peaceful was opening its curtains with a disturbance.

Part 8

「It looks like I came at a good time. After all I was able to interrupt the scolding towards Lux-kun like this.」

Inside the dining hall late at night where there was nobody else.

Krulcifer wearing glasses was sitting at the opposite side of the table.

A textbook and several pieces of paper were spread on the table.

And then, there were cups that were filled with tea.

It was a study meeting with Krulcifer after so long.

About the case of bathing with Yoruka, he was saved by Krulcifer when Airi was about to start her scolding.

「You really saved me, Krulcifer-san. But this is really troubling, certainly Yoruka's act was also problematic, but to think that she would get into a confrontation with Coral...」

「It's a really interesting story. I wonder if Lux-kun isn't really swayed by us is because you are more interested in boys rather than girls?」

「Please stop it Krulcifer-san!?」

When Lux became flustered, Krulcifer chuckled.

It was troubling that she would tease him sometimes like this, even so his time with her was precious.

When Lux became a Seven Dragon Paladin and he was absent from the Academy, or when he was in recuperation from injury or fatigue, Krulcifer would summarize the gist of the lessons he missed and taught it to him in an easy to understand way.

He was extremely helped by her giving him a follow up in the aspect of schoolwork that he neglected.

「Come to think of it, Krulcifer-san will depart early in the morning tomorrow right? To the Ymir Theocracy.」

「Yes. It's lonely to part with Lux-kun, but it can't be helped. After all I'm worried about my family and the Ruin's matter, and also about Mel and Ney Louches.」

The aide exchange that would be implemented for two weeks originally should be done with a country the aide wasn't connected with, but Krulcifer would go back to Ymir Theocracy as an exception. She would also be accompanied by guards.



This was because Krulcifer was a Xfer. This exception for her was to avoid Dragon Marauder kidnapping or attacking her.

「Be careful Krulcifer-san. There won't be any action to conquer a Ruin for a while but, it's exactly because it's this kind of time that you need to be vigilant.」

「Yes, Lux-kun too. —That's what I want to say here but, it looks like you still cannot have it easy and relax. After all it also looked like something fun happened after the world summit the other day.」

Krulcifer spoke with a voice that was filled with implication and smiled mischievously.

Lux who saw that recalled the end of the summit the other day.

Almost all the Seven Dragon Paladins and their aides broke up and left the room. And then the girl with characteristic red hair and black military uniform—Rosa Granhide was staying behind inside the room.

Her evil deeds and crimes were mostly fabrications of the King of Vices, Callesia, where she was made to shoulder Callesia's infamy. Right now she continued to be a member of the Seven Dragon Paladins under the surveillance of the captain Magialca.

But, to the end it was a story behind the scenes.

So that the domestic strife of Heiburg wouldn't get exposed, she was attending the meeting with her usual dangerous attitude even with the absence of Callesia, but, 『—Thank you very much, Lux-sama. For saving this me.....I was, happy. That's, if you ever need something, please let me repay you no matter what.』

She said that to him shyly with her injured arm still suspended by a cloth and her gaze averted from him.

Hearing her words, a feeling of gratitude towards Philuffy for stopping him that time welled up inside Lux once more.

He almost made a choice that couldn't be undone at that time.

『You don't need to thank me or anything. Best regards from now on too, Rosa.』

He replied like that with a smile, then he shook her hand before parting from her.

This was the only result that he could feel relieved about from the case in the Heiburg Republic where there were a lot of appalling incidents, but then Celis looked at him with a troubled gaze.

『I, I have also heard about her circumstances but, Lux was a bit too ^{deredere} ~~flirty~~ just now. That's, if you like big breasts then.....i, i-i-i-i-i-it's nothing-!』

Her face became red and she ran away in the middle of talking.

When he told about that happening after the summit to Krulcifer, she frowned slightly.

「Certainly that is troublesome. Not just Rosa, but also Celis-senpai—」

「.....? Rather than that, what about Krulcifer-san? Did anything strange in the summit—」

「I also didn't encounter anything exceptionally strange there. I only talked a bit with Mel..... Aa, conversely, I don't really get those girls. That duo from Turkimes Confederation, Soffice and Uruk if I'm not mistaken?」

The Seven Dragon Paladin with characteristic dark brown skin and a red tattoo, and her aide.

The elder sister Soffice was taciturn and wouldn't say anything. She would show agreement or refusal using her expression or head movement, then Uruk would interpret it and spoke for her in the meeting.

Their act that was comical sometimes didn't match the oppressive atmosphere of the meeting.

「But, this time too I didn't notice anything strange from them though?」

Based from what he saw in the meeting, Lux couldn't see any suspicious movement and he said that to Krulcifer, but, 「I guess—but, it was funny when that girl's little sister responded to my call.」

Lux also saw that scene.

Right after the summit.

In front of everyone who was starting to leave the room, Krulcifer called out 「Hey」 to Lux. At that instant, Uruk who was facing the other way suddenly turned around toward Krulcifer.

『Yes, what is it desu?』

They were separated by a distance of several ml, so Lux and Krulcifer were puzzled, but Soffice hurriedly grabbed Uruk's neck and pulled her away.

『I'm sorry desu! Soffice said 'Don't be so absentminded!' just now desu! To me!』

The figure of Uruk getting dragged away with teary eyes was inviting laughter until the end.

『Well, I think that was just a mistake, but I think it will be better to feel the tension for these three months from now. The enemy can aim at us easier exactly at this time where we relax our attention because we won't need to conquer the Ruins for a while. After all I and also Celis-senpai will be absent from here too.』

『Yes. I won't let my guard down but, Lisha-sama and the others are here too, so I think it will be fine.』

『.....That is worrying instead, based on my personal circumstance that is.』

『Eh.....?』

Because Krulcifer spoke with a small voice only at that last part, Lux asked back.

Then *knock knock*, the door of the dining room was knocked and Celis's voice came.

『Both of you, do you have a bit of time? I have something to talk with Lux so—』

It seemed the night was still long.

『Time passes quickly when we are having fun. Then, please don't get carried away no matter what while I'm not here. Just in case, I intend to put some countermeasures in motion in my own way though.』

「A,ahaha.....」

Krulcifer left after giving him a reminder that he really didn't understand.

After that—Celis who was worried about Lux's body gave him a massage that she learned from Philuffy. He enjoyed the massage while passing a peaceful time with her too.

Part 9

When Lux returned to his room, Coral who became his temporary roommate was waiting for him.

Because there was no empty rooms in the girl's dormitory, it was inevitable for him to stay in Lux's room. When the dorm mother asked Lux about it, he consented readily.

At the bunk beds that were prepared, Lux slept at the bottom while Coral took the top.

Different from the agitated atmosphere when Yoruka was present before, right now it was calm.

「I talked a bit with Airi-chan and the others for a bit. I also asked about her—about Yoruka-san.」

It seemed Airi apologized about Yoruka's intrusion into the bath while making a follow up about her eccentricity.

「Sorry for the various troubles.」

Lux smiled wryly while talking towards the upper bed.

Looking back, this might be the first time he was sleeping in the same room with a boy of the same age.

Somehow a mysterious feeling of excitement was produced in Lux's chest.

「No. I myself was a bit discomposed there. How should I say it, the life here is too fresh in various aspects—I'm having fun.」

The voice of Coral's reply sounded somewhat distant.

It gave Lux the impression that until now he was placed in an environment with a stiff atmosphere because he was a distant relative of the princess.

「I think that her method is too forceful but, I'm a bit jealous.」

「I, is that so.....?」

Lux who recalled Yoruka's conduct made a dubious voice. Coral replied with a wry smile.

「That's right. At the very least she knows what she herself is. She is living to serve you without any hesitation. I believe that is a good thing. And of course, for Lux-kun too.」

「.....Is it different for you, Coral?」

「Actually, I have no memory of the past—when I woke up on a bed three years ago, I lost all my past memories.」

「——」

The unexpected confession made Lux speechless.

「Since then, I supplemented my memory as much as possible with the letter that my parents left for me as the base. My remaining family is an elder sister and a younger sister. And then, there is also a mission that was written on the letter. That's all. Though, I have to be satisfied just by being able to live safely like this.」

「.....」

Lux couldn't reply to Coral's murmur that sounded somewhat fleeting.

Lux himself hadn't gone through an easy upbringing until now by any means, even so, right now he had a foundation that allowed him to fight.

What he should accomplish as an imperial family member of the Old Empire.

And even though he had hesitation about that way of living, he didn't lose sight of his path.

「I understand what I should do and what I have to do no matter what. But I have no foundation that can make me believe that it is the right thing to do. It might be spoiled of me but, if I'm able to find it—」

「.....You will find it, surely.」

While Coral was continuing to mutter, Lux cut him off with those words.

He didn't think before speaking, his voice came out naturally.

「Even though you cannot remember your past memories, you can just make new memories from here on. I think it will be fine if you decide based on what you see from here on. Greifer, too, is also a better person than what he looks like, besides—I'm also here for you as a friend.」

「.....You're right. Thank you.」

Coral replied with a lovely voice that was somewhat filled with shyness.

Lux wondered why. Even though they were fellow males, he felt itchy and tickled just from that reaction.

「The, then good night. Best regards for tomorrow too!」

To cover up that incomprehensible emotion, Lux suddenly turned off the lamp.

Silence came along with the darkness and before long a quiet sleeper's breathing leaked out from his mouth.

Recently the coldness of Winter was getting worse, but it felt like the room felt considerably warmer with just the addition of one more person inside.

But, at that time Lux still hadn't noticed.

About the sound that was approaching from outside the door and what that faint presence would bring about.

About how these days that he believed would continue peacefully for a while, was the calm before the storm.

「As I thought, it's like that. I have to manage somehow while those girls are absent—」

How Coral was muttering those words towards the matter of Yoruka.

Episode 2 – The Right to Guard Lux

Part 1

「Is everyone here? How are your preparations? Theen, from now, the match to obtain the right to guard Lux-chi will begin!」

‘WAAAAAAAH.....!’

The wave of thunderous cheers was spreading amidst the ^{onlookers} female students.

At the center of the courtyard, Lux was sitting on a bench with a troubled face. Tillfur who was acting as a presenter was in front of him.

And then before them, were Coral and Yoruka who were standing while facing each other.

Due to the aide exchange mission, Krulcifer and Celis departed from the Academy early in the morning.

He thought that the situation would progress without any particular problem other than that, but it seemed that the girls somehow prepared unthinkable explosives.

First when Lux woke up early in the morning, Yoruka was on guard inside his room.

Furthermore—she was only in her underwear covered with a single blanket.

As expected, it seemed Yoruka was taking this action because she couldn't trust Coral. But it went without saying that when Coral woke up and saw that, he stiffened once more.

Tillfur arrived at that timing, that was why the situation turned into a

complete mess.

Coral who was exasperated as expected made a certain suggestion to Lux.

『Just in case, Krulcifer-san asked me a favor. She asked me to properly take care of Lux-kun. Like this, I won't have any face to meet her.』

It seemed this was what Krulcifer meant by『put some countermeasures in motion』.

On the other hand, it seemed that Yoruka was also given an instruction from Celis『Please protect Lux』, and she declared that as Lux's servant, she wouldn't abandon this duty.

Thus the two wouldn't see eye to eye with each other at all. Like that, the story reached until Relie's ears, but surely that was a mistake.

『I guess, then—isn't it fine if it's decided by the two competing with each other? It's just right that Lux-kun who is in the middle of recuperation can give judgment at least—』

The Triad received such appointment, and after school they implemented it like this.

『I will protect Lux-kun so there won't be any problem. If I win this match, you will act while thinking about the proper time and distance of doing things, is that fine?』

『Understood. And if you lose, then as promised, please stay away from Aruji-sama.』

Coral and Yoruka were confronting each other in front of Lux. They confirmed the reward for this match.

Right after seeing that, Airi let out a small sigh.

『Sorry Airi, to make you go along with something like this.』

Strictly speaking, the management of the match was left to the Triad, but with her connection to Noct, Airi was entrusted with the judging and also progressing this match.

『If Nii-san think so, please act a bit more firmly. Really, since the past Nii-san

is full of openings in this kind of matter.]

「Uu.....」

Lux became depressed from the retort of Airi who was sitting beside him.

Although, limited to this time, this wasn't something that was caused by Lux's indecisive attitude.

This could be said as something that was caused accidentally by the requests of Krulcifer and Celis.

「Then, how about we now start the match with the rights to guard Lux-kun for two weeks at stake? The two of you, are you prepared?」

「I'm ready anytime.」

「I don't mind.」

The two competitors nodded at the voice of the leader of the Triad, Sharis.

This time Lux and Airi acted as the judges of the match. And then—

「Yes. Then, first we will use this way to decide the subject of the match this time.」

Next Noct led in the Princess of the New Kingdom, Lizsharte.

「—Hey, wait a second! What's with this match!? I didn't hear anything about this!」

But, Lisha yelled right after she appeared and put a stop to it.

「Lisha-samaa, please read the mood for a bit here. At this kind of time you see, you should follow along the atmosphere properly.」

「Rather, no matter who won here, Lux will still get taken away completely won't it!? Even though that Krulcifer and Celis are finally gone. During that time I thought.....I'll be able to do various things together with Lux, and yet!」

It seemed Lisha had some kind of scheme going on, that she ran her mouth in anguish like that. In response, the two contenders spoke to her.

「Please don't worry. I will only stay by Aruji-sama's side, it will be your freedom to spend time with Aruji-sama.」

「Me too, I will only stay near Lux doing my task, so I won't be a hindrance.」

「That's why I'm saying that's no good!」

「.....?」

Lisha held her head and crouched down in response to Yoruka and Coral who responded gently.

Lux tilted his head seeing Lisha acting like that. Beside him, Airi let out a long sigh.

「Everyone is really hopeless. Lisha-sama, please decide the subject of the match quickly.」

「I get it! Aah, geez, then as I thought—」

「Err, please stop with subjects like Drag-Ride minor trivia or the like. No one will be able to answer that.」(Tillfur) 「O, obviously I won't. If you think that I'm thinking of nothing but Drag-Rides around the clock, then you are making a great mistake!」

「.....」

The surroundings showed conflicted expressions at Lisha who was raising her voice in objection while folding her arms.

It seemed Lisha immediately got an idea after that, she raised her face energetically.

「Yosh, then I'll say it! The subject of the match from me is—disguise showdown!」

「Yes.....?」

Lux tilted his head with a puzzled look. Lisha puffed out her chest and declared.

「It's not 'yes?'. A guard has to be by the side of their charge no matter what the situation. Being able to match their charge and appear natural, that is an important factor don't you think?」

Those were the words of Lisha as the princess of the New Kingdom.

The princess who decided and appointed Lux as her personal knight.

It was a concept that surfaced exactly because she was someone in a position where a guard was essential whether in a public setting or in private.

「That's a thought that is more proper than expected coming from Lisha-sama. Then, Coral-san and Yoruka-san, please change into an appearance that is suitable to be at Nii-san's side on a holiday.」

After thinking for a bit, Airi gave the instruction in her managing role.

The female students including the Triad ran about gathering costumes. Then the two began to change clothes inside the tents for one person that were prepared.

「Is the preparation for both of you okay? Then, the first match, the disguise showdown—here we go!」

At the same time as Tillfur's declaration, the appearance of the two who had changed clothes was exposed.

On one hand, was Coral who was wearing a lovely pure white dress.

On the other hand, Yoruka was wearing a dress like a high class lady. Although the dress had black base color, it was decorated with white laces and ribbons.

Their charming appearance made the girls go 'Kyaaah!' in delighted uproar.

Yoruka was showing a natural smile, but Coral was acting bewildered with faint embarrassment.

「Wait, why am I made to dress like a normal girl!?」

Even though his cheeks were red from shame, there was no out of place feeling from him at all, perhaps because of his usual braided hair.

Rather his appearance suited his atmosphere, and his slender legs that stretched out from the dress caused eyes to reflexively watch them in fascination.

「Hrm. It looks like a new outstanding talent has appeared. Like this there is no choice, one day we will have to make Lux-kun dress as a girl together with him as a set—」

「Yep yep. With this the enjoyment will expand widely.」

As expected, it seemed it was the Triad who recommended that appearance due to their bad scheming.

「Err, why did you two make Coral wear female clothing?」

When Lux retorted with a conflicted face, Sharis made a smile full of confidence.

「A guard also functions as intimidation to prevent the threat, but such thing cannot really be expected from Sir Coral with his delicate features correct? Then we should purposefully dress him as a weak girl instead to feign an opening, where in fact he is a boy Drag-Knight. Like that he will be able to carry out his duty as a guard.」

「.....」

「.....I, is that really, true?」

Lux showed a really complicated face, but the honest Coral accepted the reason as it was.

Lux who noticed the wordless gaze from Airi somehow guessed her meaning and raised his voice.

「I, it suits you Coral. That's, you look cute.」

「I-, is that so.....!? Then, it's a bit embarrassing but, I guess it's fine?」

Lux followed up the perplexed Coral and somehow calmed down the situation.

On the other hand Yoruka also walked forward lightly and bowed towards Lux.

「How about my appearance, Aruji-sama?」

「Ah, Yoruka too is also showing a novel appearance but, that's—I think it's lovely.」

This too wasn't just flattery but Lux's honest feeling.

Her asymmetrically colored eyes of blue and purple color, her skin that was like white porcelain, and her glossy black hair.

And then the bewitching atmosphere that she brought out herself was suited

to that mysterious black dress.

For a man, her charm was something hard to resist that would make them want to reach out their hand even if they knew it was dangerous.

「And so, which one has the appearance that is worthy to be Lux-chi's guard?」

Tillfur in her host role faced the judges Lux and Airi and prompted their evaluation.

Lux considered carefully, then he gave his answer in front of everyone.

「That's, my choice is Coral.....I think? Certainly his appearance makes it hard to notice that he is a guard, and he doesn't look conspicuous—」

「Really? This appearance, it suits me that much.....?」

Coral muttered. Even though his cheeks were dyed red from shame, but somehow he didn't look like that dissatisfied about it.

That gesture was cuter than expected. Lux controlled himself when he felt like he was going to feel strange.

In response to his opinion, the spectators including Lisha were spontaneously wrapped with the air of acceptance, but, 「Then, I think I will endorse for Yoruka-san.」

Right after that, Airi put her voice for Yoruka instead.

「Ooh~. Has friendship budded inside even Airi-chan? Or perhaps, is it jealousy towards Lux-chi?」

「Both are wrong!」

Airi first objected to Tillfur's teasing, then,

「Nii-san is only looking at the surface. There is decisive difference between Yoruka-san and Coral-san. That is—」

「Somehow, Yoruka's center of gravity is strange. She might, be carrying weapons.」

Philuffy who was silently watching while nibbling on a rusk until now muttered with a small voice.

Lisha who heard that was taken aback with sudden realization and she held her breath.

「Don't tell me, inside that outfit a Sword Device is—!？」

「Yes, exactly.」

Yoruka nodded and from inside her skirt, she took out the Sword Device of the Divine Drag-Ride Yato no Kami.

It seemed that fluffy black long skirt also served as camouflage.

In a sense, it was a choice that was really like Yoruka.

「In order to protect Aruji-sama, a Sword Device is the minimum equipment that cannot be let go. One cannot just focus simply on appearance.」

「Muu.....」

Coral puffed out his cheeks slightly and felt moderately vexed.

But, Lux's judgement couldn't be overturned this late, so it became a draw. But here the originator of the match Lisha threw her vote to Yoruka, so the first point went to her.

That victory that was unexpected even for Lux caused the surrounding spectators to be stirred.

—

「Unexpectedly, that girl isn't half bad. Normally she feels hard to approach, but she is interesting.」

「Eee, for me Coral-kun is definitely better though. I can tolerate it if it's him who is at Lux-kun's side, it can work out somehow with various things like that.」

—

「.....」

And so on. Perhaps it was just his imagination, but it felt like there was also suspicious opinions mixed in, however he decided not to think about it deeply.

「Theeen, let's go to the second match! We are changing the venue for the neeext!」

「Everyone, please line up. We have asked permission from the headmaster.」

「Yes. The preparation for the next venue is already in order.」

Next, the Triad members, Sharis, Tillfur, and Noct raised their voices and they moved to the next battlefield.

「Wait a second, everyone, aren't they all too prepared.....?」

「I think that everyone might be having fun playing with Nii-san. After all Nii-san was absent for a while from the Academy.」

Lux could only smile wryly at Airi's teasing smile that was filled with implication.

—

「—And so, the second match. Now Philuffy, please decide the subject!」

They moved the venue to the indoor practice ground.

Just as the name implied, it was a facility for practicing hand-to-hand combat without using a Drag-Ride. The place was spacious with wooden floor and red carpet spread out.

Philuffy who was entrusted with deciding the match's subject suggested—

「Err, sweets making match.....is it? Lu-chan, likes sweets after all.」

When Philuffy muttered that with an absentminded expression and tone, Lisha hurriedly retorted.

「Wait, that's wrong you airhead girl! You said that it was art of self-defense wasn't it!?」

「Did I, say that?」

Philuffy tilted her head hearing Lisha's retort.

After silently chewing on a doughnut for a while, *pon* she tapped her hand.

「That's, right. In order to protect Lu-chan, strength is necessary.」

Philuffy claimed so after she somehow recalled her own words. In short, the objective of the match was to gauge the ability as a guard from their skill in unarmed combat.

「Aaand so, Lux-chi will be the opponent of the two.」

「Eeeh!? Me!?」

In front of Yoruka and Coral who were wearing uniforms, Lux became anxious from what Tillfur told him.

「It can't be helped. There is no way we can make those two fight directly.」

「That's, well, that's true but—」

「It will be their win if when Lux-kun grabs at them, they can push you down instead. There is no need for detailed rules as long as they don't use weapons and they don't injure you.」

「Yes. Then this time please begin from Yoruka-san. I will time it.」

- Kaaan*. The small bell sound hurried on Lux and he started moving.

(I don't really know how strong Yoruka is when she isn't using a sword, but for now I have to be careful to not injure her—) For the time being Lux paid attention to that while closing his distance with Yoruka.

However in a sense it was just as expected, Yoruka had no opening.

Because Yoruka's devilish eyes could sense the fluctuations of Lux's consciousness, he might get defeated the instant he attacked carelessly.

(Then—)

The moment Lux switched into defensive posture, Yoruka's figure vanished from in front of Lux.

「—!?」

Suddenly something soft was pushed on Lux's chest.

There was a sweet fragrance that was vaguely mixed with the smell of blood.

At the same time the heartbeat and warmth of the chest was directly transmitted to him. His head became pure white from agitation.

When he noticed, he was looking up to the ceiling from the ground with someone pushing him down.

The girl's bewitching smile was in a kissing distance.

「Kyaaah!」

Shrill voices rose once more from the female students observing the match. Heat was enveloping the inside of the practice ground.

「Wait, what are you doing there-! Get away from Lux!」

「Pardon me.」

After Lisha who came rushing in a hurry tore them off from each other, Lux grabbed the hand that Airi offered to him and he stood up.

「Nii-san is completely defeated. As expected from Nii-san who is weak against girls.」

「.....」

He had no words to return to Airi's remark.

Furthermore, Yoruka had casually displayed her special move.

When Lux thought that it would be hard for him to attack and switched to a defensive stance, he was embraced at that moment.

Lux was agitated with his body pressed like that, and his foot was tripped the moment he became defenseless.

The smoothness of that sequence of motions caused everyone to hold their breath spontaneously.

「Amazing, athlete Yoruka easily caught Lux-chi. She perceived his nature of being weak against girls and then used an advanced technique on him! The time used until the opponent is subdued is less than five seconds. Has the match been decided with thiiis!?」

Tillfur yelled at the side in high tension.

Coral was simply gazing at Yoruka's fight in a daze.

「That's amazing. I'm seeing you in a better light, Yoruka-san.」

「My? With only just this much?」

Coral suddenly returned to his senses and murmured, to which Yoruka replied

back with a bewitching smile.

That provocation was told still with a carefree smile, however Coral also retorted back calmly.

「Yes. I think it's amazing enough. But, I won't lose.」

Seeing the refreshing smile of a pretty boy, the female students of the Academy shouted in joy.

「Theeen, next let's watch Coral versus Lux-chi! Get into positiooon」

Following Tillfur's announcement, Lux and Coral took distance from each other.

The surroundings was starting to put a moneyless bet about who would win. Everyone was acting like that, so Lux wondered whether this was alright.....

While Lux was harboring a tinge of unease about the future of the Academy,

「Hey, does Lux-kun know about a mirage?」

「Mirage?」

Lux tilted his head at the talk that Coral suddenly directed at him.

「It's the phenomenon of light refraction that occurs due to heated air, Nii-san. In short it's an illusion that the sense of sight and brain shows you. It's hard to see it in the New Kingdom but—」

Airi who possessed extensive knowledge added an explanation from behind.

But, he wondered what about it.

「Now then, let's leave the pointless talk at that. Let's start right away.」

「Yes. Match begin.」

Noct continued after Sharis and *kaan*, a small bell sound rang out.

Right after that, the left eye of Coral who was a few ml ahead of him was tinged with green light for a moment.

「—!？」

Lux was bewildered, even so he didn't let his guard down because of what happened with Yoruka just now too.

But, he felt the sensation of something touching his back, at the same time Coral's figure vanished.

「Eh?」

「Okay. I caught you.」

A voice whispered into his ear, at the same time he felt the sensation of a body that felt softer than he thought.

When he noticed he was in a state of being embraced from behind and Lux collapsed facing up.

「Ooooh, this is also a fast oneee! Lux-chi is hugged in the blink of an eye and got brought doooowwn!」

Tillfur raised a delighted voice. The surrounding female students raised shouts of joy.

「Hrm. He averted Lux's focus by throwing a handkerchief, and then he instantly took Lux's back—」

「Eh.....?」

Lux was bewildered by the words of Lisha who was observing from afar.

Indeed, there was a pure white handkerchief falling on the carpet of the practice ground.

But, in the first place Lux didn't see the moment it was thrown.

「Err, Lux-kun. Are you alright?」

「.....Ah, yes, I'm fine. Rather than that Coral, your body is softer than I thought.」

「I, is that so.....?」

For some reason Coral's cheeks reddened. It made Lux feel strange too.

He didn't really understand what happened, but it seemed that it was only Lux who was bewildered about what happened.

「The time is also five seconds. Is it a draw with this, Philuffy?」

Because Lux and Airi's judgement wasn't needed this time, Tillfur called like

that to Philuffy who suggested this match.

「No. It's Coral's win.」

Philuffy muttered indifferently with a serious look.

「Eeh!? But, the time is the same—」

「Because he properly, covered Lu-chan's body.」

「-.....!? I see, so that's how it is.」

Lisha spontaneously nodded at Philuffy's answer and Airi also held her breath in sudden realization.

A beat later, Lux also noticed that.

Of course, Yoruka also controlled her strength with the minimum force, but Coral made Lux collapsed while putting himself below him, softening the impact to the limit.

He was more considerate of Lux's body that still hadn't recovered completely.

「It seems, there is difference even when it's the same five seconds.」

「Yes. Not just the skill, the act of consideration can also be evaluated.」

「Nooo objection, the second round goes to Coraaall!」

Hearing the judgment of the Triad, the students who were supporting Coral broke into cheers.

When Coral lightly waved his hand in respond to them, Yoruka also smiled bewitchingly to him.

「Not bad. Besides the movement just now—you aren't a normal person aren't you?」

「I wonder about that? Now, the match is from here on.」

The atmosphere felt relatively like it was the climax, but in fact it was a simple skirmish.

But, even after that they accomplished another two matches. A Lux searching game from the Triad and a quiz game from Relie. The result was two wins and two losses for each.

The stage of the last decisive match finally came into a genuine battle.

Because it was Winter, the sun set early.

The two would finally carry out a mock battle at the practice ground at dusk.

「And so, this is the last match. As expected, Lux-chi's guard has to be a strong Drag-Knight.」

Tillfur who was wearing her Wyrm as one of the people in charge of the barrier used the Drag-Ride's sound magnifying function and announced loudly.

Yoruka and Coral wearing their pilot suits were already facing each other on the circle shaped field.

「The people of this Academy really have a lot of free time, don't they?」

「We are more or less still in a situation where we cannot relax our guard yet though.」

Agreeing with Airi who was sighing in exasperation, Lux also scratched his chin lightly.

The standby period where they had to wait before resuming to conquer Ruins was in the end something unrelated to the students who weren't in the know about the world destruction, but as expected, it seemed the students also sensed how the air of tension was gone from the whole.

Finally it became a mock battle using Drag-Rides, but naturally the competitors wouldn't use powerful weapons because the nature of the match being a side show.

According to Relie who permitted this, this match also had the official stance of showing from nearby, the battle between Coral who was a skilled EX Class Drag-Knight even in the Vanheim Principality, against Yoruka who possessed top class skill even in the New Kingdom, but—

(This is absolutely Relie-san just liking events like this huh.....)

While Lux was observing that with a conflicted face, the two quickly wore their Drag-Rides.

Of course because this was a mock battle for entertainment, Yoruka didn't

wear her Divine Drag-Ride but a general purpose Drag-Ride Drake, while Coral was also wearing a normal Wyvern, and not her EX Wyvern.

For their armaments, they both possessed Breath Gun, Blade, Dagger, Wire Tail, and Cannon.

Because Wyvern was considered superior in basic ability due to its flying ability, Coral should be in advantage.

「Lux-kun. Will you give me any advice?」

Coral who was wearing Wyvern asked that to him, but Lux was troubled about how to answer.

Because honestly speaking, he felt that at this point of time it would be Yoruka's victory.

It wasn't that he was underestimating Coral's strength, but Yoruka's strength in facing Drag-Knights was extraordinary.

Even if she couldn't use Yato no Kami this time, with her ability to use the three hidden techniques of Drag-Ride control just like Lux, and her secret technique that made use of the gap between consciousness—Instant Strike, Yoruka's overwhelming superiority was unshakeable.

Besides, he also couldn't think of any way for Coral to deal with that.

「Eeerrr, just don't be reckless. Because Yoruka is strong.」

「You really have faith in her. I'm envious.....」

Coral smiled with an expression without sarcasm, however he calmly gripped the control stick in his hand.

「But, even I have worked quite hard. That's why, I think I'll have you see me in a better light with this fight.」

And then Coral declared like that conservatively which was just like him and he stepped forward.

「Theeen, the last match. Battle –Start-!」

While Lux and the others were watching from the spectator seats, the battle finally started.

「The match this time will use a point system. Well, it will be troubling if anyone got injured.」

Airi who was sitting beside Lux added an explanation.

It was one of the rules that was also used in tournaments. It was a method of deciding the victor by earning points mainly from landing a clean hit on the opponent rather than making the opponent unable to act.

In the end it would be fine if they could just land a hit, so the damage to the Drag-Ride and the injury to the Drag-Knight could be suppressed. It made it easier whether for beginners or for experts.

By the way, when it was the flying type Wyvern that fought, they would be unreachable if they continued to escape to the sky, so their flight was limited to a certain altitude until ten seconds at maximum.

At the same time with the start of the battle, if Coral went by the book, he should drive his Wyvern to take distance and observed the situation but—he suddenly assaulted forward in full speed.

『Uwa! It's a boldness that doesn't match his face!』

Tillfur who was deploying a barrier raised an astonished voice from her megaphone, but Sharis added calmly.

「No, it's not a bad decision. In the close distance right after the battle opening, Wyvern can still be chased if Drake advances forward with its Step. In other words—」(TN: Just a reminder, Step is when Drake leaped using booster from its legs.)「Yes. If he predicted that Yoruka-san would guess that he would take distance and then chase after him, then charging forward in reverse instead might be passable.」

In a direct clash, then Wyvern with its mobility that could take the overhead position of the enemy was at the advantage.

Thus there would be no problem even if he challenged Yoruka from the front, that was Coral's judgment but—Yoruka's figure vanished from before him.

From the view point of Lux and the others at the spectator seats, Yoruka's position was at the right of Coral who was rushing ahead—Yoruka was in the

blind spot that was hidden by Coral's armored arm when the right handed Coral lifted up his Blade.

「Side Step!? She predicted even this situation!?」

While Airi raised her voice in surprise, Lux groaned.

Yoruka didn't simply predict Coral's first move, on the contrary she even escaped to a position where she could launch a sure kill attack.

Furthermore—she even freely used the camouflage function of Drake that was the special equipment type.

When a Drake switched into offense, the effectiveness of their camouflage function should drop remarkably, but at that time Yoruka's slash was already hitting.

Therefore there was no problem.

「.....-!？」

Coral noticed Yoruka's tactic a beat later and he turned right.

At that instant, the slash in super speed that came from the Drake was already seizing his wrist.

「—Quick Draw.」

Right after the slash landed, Yoruka who had appeared smiled fearlessly.

Coral dropped his Blade from the impact that hit the right wrist of his Wyvern.

『Due to the success making the opponent drop his weapon, Yoruka, two point get! Noow then, with this the score is 2 to 0, in the end will Coral—!』

「No, that's wrong.」

But, even after dropping the Blade from his right hand, Coral still showed composure.

「.....Yes, the score is a tie of 2 to 2.」

In response Yoruka made her Drake do a Step and took distance far away backwards.

The Blade her armored arm was holding had vanished.

「What is the meaning of this? Why has Yoruka-san's Blade disappear—」

「That's not it Airi. Coral took it away!」

Lux faced Airi whose eyes snapped wide open spontaneously and he added an explanation.

At the same time Lisha who was watching at his side also said in astonishment.

「He predicted Yoruka's tactic!? No, he got outwitted, but he immediately reacted.」

A Wire Tail was grasped without anyone noticing in the left hand of Coral's Wyvern.

With that, Lux solved the puzzle.

「You are a sly fox despite your appearance aren't you? To think that you gave the impression that the Blade is your main weapon while actually you are a whip user using Wire Tail.」

「About being a bad person, aren't we the same in that regard? I also thought that was it for me just now.」

Coral and Yoruka who faced each other in the distance exchanged banter with each other.

From their conversation, it could be confirmed that right after Coral's right armored arm was struck, he wrapped his Wire Tail around the Drake's Blade and snatched it away.

At first he only readied his Blade, but the moment he skated forward at the opening of the battle, his left hand grabbed the Wire Tail.

In short, Coral contrived a plan to block Yoruka's first attack using his Blade, then at the same time he would use that as feint to entangle Yoruka's Blade with his Wire Tail.

Although that plan failed due to Yoruka's surprise attack, he reflexively covered it up by swinging his whip.

To be able to unleash an attack that precise in the spur of the moment like

that simply meant that he learned to fight using a whip as his main weapon.

Lux briefly explained like that, but Airi tilted her head.

「But, isn't that unusual? I too have seen several hundred mock battles of Drag-Ride until now but, if I have to say, Wire Tail is a supplemental weapon. I have never seen a Drag-Knight who fights using it as their main weapon though—」

「I also have never seen anyone like that. Or rather, to the end Wire Tail is used only as a sub weapon in military academy. In the first place Wire Tail also cannot conduct energy through it.」

「—That's what they said. Is there a secret to it?」(Yoruka)

After taking enough distance, Yoruka was gradually closing the distance.

Her hands that had lost the Blade were holding two Daggers.

With the rule this time, a weapon that fell on the ground would be considered as 『destroyed item』, and they couldn't be picked again.

Yoruka was a pure swordsman, so she intended to use her remaining several Daggers.

「In the first place a whip isn't a suitable weapon to face Abyss with, it's disadvantageous using it when facing against many. In addition its ability to wound and kill is also low. It won't be effective against Drag-Knights that are using armor and barrier.」(Yoruka) In addition, there was also a risk of hitting comrades by using a whip.

Even if for example Coral was a master of using Wire Tail, he should be in an overwhelming disadvantage against Yoruka who was a master of Blade.

「That might be so. But my surprise attack succeeded like this as you can see. And you yourself, with just those Daggers that cannot even be filled with energy, you won't be able to pierce my barrier. I think the match is already decided don't you agree?」

Yoruka's mild provocation was also returned calmly by Coral.

The Wire Tail might not be useful anymore now, but at present Coral who had snatched Yoruka's Blade had the advantage.

Yoruka also still had Cannon, but it wouldn't be able to easily hit Wyvern with its high mobility.

Lux was analyzing it like that at the corner of his head, and right after that, the Drake charged with explosive acceleration.

「—!？」

The Dagger was thrown, and then a high speed Step that was chasing after it.

Wind was ejected from the back of the four feet, accelerating the Drake. It closed in instantly.

On the other hand, Coral reacted calmly. He quickly brushed off the Dagger with his Wire Tail, but another Dagger that was hiding on the shadow of the first one was approaching.

「Kuh.....！」

Coral who was taken by surprise deployed his barrier and blocked the second Dagger.

Furthermore using his free right hand, he slashed at the Drake using his Blade toward the right shoulder—but, Yoruka clapped her two armored hands and caught the Blade in between.

「That's—!？」

Coral was shocked, even so he launched Howling Howl towards the torso of the Drake that was wide open.

Yoruka was blown backward, even so she snatched back the Blade from the Wyvern's armored arm.

「This is called sword catching. With this the tables have turned isn't it?」

The students at the spectator seats gulped seeing the unimaginable offense and defense.

With this the situation was even.

No, even if the two's weapon skill was equal, but from the trait of the weapon, Yoruka had obtained a big lead once more.

『With the Howling Howl hitting, two point for Coral! And with the recapture

of her weapon, two point in addition for Yoruka! The fight is really closeee!』

The point was 4 to 4, but in reality the match was reaching its climax.

Coral used his free hand to take out his Breath Gun in preparation of the next exchange.

—But, the moment he already took his stance, his shoulder where the Force Core was hidden was slashed.

「Wha.....!」

Coral's eyes were opened wide in shock.

Seen from the side, it looked like Yoruka was simply approaching and then slashing normally, but the reality was different.

「That's—Instant Strike.」

Yoruka's special move that aimed to attack the moment the concentration of the opponent's consciousness cut off.

In addition she skillfully avoided the barrier and landed her hit.

The direct attack to the shoulder where the Force Core was located would cause the decrease in the Drag-Ride's performance, at the same time it was also the defeat condition in a match that was using a point system.

『Due to the hit at the Force Core, the winner is Yoruka—』

「No, it's a draw.」

Yoruka faced Tillfur who was declaring the winner and showed a smile.

The Sword Device of the Drake she was wearing that was located in the sword belt at her waist was entangled with a whip like before.

「Ah.....」

Lisha and Airi noticed that and raised their voices.

Getting one's Sword Device taken away was also a losing condition in a point system match.

Even in real battle, it would directly lead to defeat if the Sword Device that was the control stick for mind control operation was taken away.

『I, it's a draw! Due to both sides fulfilling the winning condition simultaneously, this final match became a draw!』

After Sharis proclaimed to the whole surroundings using her Drag-Ride's megaphone, cheers rose from the venue.

Voices that praised Yoruka's bottomless strength.

And then, the compliments for Coral, the handsome youth who was temporarily transferred to the Academy and proved his strength that wasn't inferior to Yoruka were also flying around.

『That's amazing Yoruka-san. Please enter Syvalles too no matter what!』

『Coral-kun, that was wonderful— please train us too!』

And so on, applause and cheers were raining down while the two dispelled their armor and faced each other.

『As expected, your skill with a Drag-Ride is amazing. You got me.』

『I'm also surprised. To think you were hiding such skill—』

Right after Yoruka slashed, Coral's whip slipped through her Drake's barrier and entangled around the handle of her Sword Device. That technique also surprised Lux.

『No. As I thought you are better than me. This time, the conditions are better for the weapon I'm using, I also took you by surprise. And even with that I still could not win.』

Coral told that with a reserved attitude. Yoruka smiled in response and,

『However, I'm glad, how you showed your seriousness for the sake of Aruji-sama. If it's like that, then I can trust you a little.』

『Ah.....』

Coral was taken aback. It was there the Triad who acted as referee rushed in.

The leader Sharis wedged in between the two and told the verdict.

『Both of you were magnificent. With the draw this time, it's decided that during these two weeks until Sir Coral returns back, you two will guard Lux-kun alternately, is it fine like that?』

「Yes. I look forward to working with you.」

「Understood.」

Coral and Yoruka each nodded and it felt like the case was closed with that.

But, Lisha rushed out from the spectator seats in a panic.

「HEY, WAIT A SECOOOONDD! Don't decide it as you pleased between just you two! If you two monopolize Lux alternately like that, what about me huh!」

「Err, Lisha-sama. It's not like Coral and Yoruka will stay beside me the whole time. I will go to meet Lisha-sama myself then.」

「Lu-chan's guard, is my role.」

「Ah, it's fine even without Philuffy doing that. It's, while I'm in the Academy it should be all right for the time being.」

Next Philuffy also said that expressionlessly. After Lux dealt with that too, it seemed that the talk was settled somehow.

「After everything is said and done, Nii-san is naïve as always.」

The place calmed down even with the poisonous words that Airi spewed with a reproachful gaze towards him.

Although the female students were looking at Coral and Yoruka enviously, they were satisfied with the result of the event and they all soon broke up from there.

Part 2

「Just what have I done. I got into Krulcifer's cajolery against my better judgment. Yoruka, and everyone in the Academy, are they alright I wonder.....?」

Inside a hotel room that was sparse in furniture but looked neat, Celis was muttering while showering lightly with hot water.

Celis was traveling towards the land far east of the New Kingdom.

What she was recalling was the happening in the Academy as expected.

Inside her heart, she was envying Krulcifer who only returned to her home country as a special exception due to the danger to the Ymir Theocracy in this aide exchange.

Furthermore she got carried away by Krulcifer's cajolery and did something that was inappropriate for the captain of Syvalles.

『Celis-senpai, I wish to consult with you for a bit, is it fine?』

A few days before they departed to other countries, Krulcifer brought to her a certain topic to discuss with a meaningful expression.

She was asking Celis if she could request something from Yoruka while the two of them were leaving due to the aide exchange.

Celis was naturally tilting her head in puzzlement. But Krulcifer continued the talk with a cool expression.

『I'm asking Coral-kun to take care of Lux-kun. I told him, how I'm troubled because Lux-kun often gets into trouble with the girls in the Academy, and so I asked him who is a boy to follow up after Lux-kun.』

『Certainly, Lux often causes that kind of problem but, is that something which needs to be focused on like that?』

Celis replied like that. In response, Krulcifer shrugged her shoulders slightly.

『I don't really like to speak bluntly like this but, at this rate Lux-kun will get taken away you know?』

Krulcifer showed an unusually anxious expression while making this kind of supposition.

In the sham honeymoon trip with Philuffy, Lux deepened his bond considerably with her.

It was to the degree that Lux even presented her with a new sword belt and told her that he wanted her to stay by his side when previously he wanted to distance her from fighting if possible.

If she and Celis went away from the Academy at this timing, headmaster Relie surely wouldn't overlook this big chance and would scheme to hitch those two together.

If that happened, by the time the two of them returned back, there was even the possibility that the two would have gotten hitched already.

『In the worst case, Lux-kun might be released from his criminal collar and the matter will be over before the case of Sacred Eclipse is taken care of. Because of that, a deterrence is necessary while we aren't there.』

『That's—』

『It's a simple matter. It will be fine if two people other than that childhood friend quarreled over Lux-kun. If Lux-kun's surrounding is constantly turbulent, it will become a countermeasure for the time being. Besides, the truth is that there is danger around Lux-kun for real right now correct? I believe that making a request to that follower girl isn't a mistake.』

Celis even felt admiration toward Krulcifer who even shrewdly prepared a reason for Celis, but in short this also meant that the situation was that serious that Krulcifer couldn't even bother to keep up appearances.

Krulcifer told Coral that Yoruka was dangerous so she wanted him to watch her.

And if Celis told Yoruka that Coral was dangerous so she wanted her to watch

him, one of the two would inevitably stay at Lux's side constantly.

(That girl is troubling. Besides, I who also got convinced might be disqualified as one of the Four Great Nobles.)

Celis was recalling such thing around that time when the match between Yoruka and Coral was settled for the moment.

Celis who departed from the New Kingdom early in the morning had also arrived at the vicinity of the Marcafal Kingdom.

Even when she was flying using her Drag-Ride, it took two days. Because of that tonight she stayed in the inn of the small country, Remdalt, that was located in a mountain district. Tomorrow she would arrive at her destination.

She was basically traveling with the captain of the Seven Dragon Paladins, Magialca. She was rest assured with her strength, but—

「As expected, I cannot let my guard down against this person—.....aren't you thinking anything like that, miss Academy's strongest?」

Perhaps she didn't want to waste even the slightest time, because after arriving here Magialca showed her face to the company in this land, negotiated about things like the mining of ore using Drag-Rides, then she showed her face at Celis's room and said that.

The inn's room was spacious and tidy, but they didn't stay in the same room.

She was sitting on the bed where Celis would sleep, wearing a negligee with a showy pattern.

「Don't be that still, how about you also drink some alcohol? Let's talk without reservation as fellow woman, hm?」

「I refuse. If someone who will get drunk easily like me drinks alcohol, it will become a hindrance to my duty.」

Magialca thrust a glass filled with wine towards her, but Celis refused it curtly.

Magialca Zen Vanfrick.

She was a girl who wore an outfit that possessed functional beauty and the flashiness that was like a merchant, or perhaps, like an alchemist. The style of

her hair that was tied up to form loops was her distinctive trait.

Looking from just her appearance, she looked smaller and younger than Celis, but she was leading the world's biggest company and possessed enormous influence in every country. This woman was also someone mysterious.

「Hrm, how boring. It's great to be diligent, but if you are too serious you will find yourself having the rug pulled from under your feet. Even if this aide exchange is for sounding out each country's intentions, but you won't last for two weeks if you are baring your hostility like that right?」

「.....」

What Magialca said was correct, but there was also no way she could easily relax here.

Because, although Celis tried to sound out the intention of the Marcafal Kingdom and Magialca, but there was also the possibility of them pulling out information about the New Kingdom from her instead.

「Then, is it alright if I ask several questions?」

「Oo, you can ask me anything. However that's only if you will drink a whole glass of this for each question.」

「That's not permitted. If you say that, then I'll sleep already.」

「Haa, you are an Ojou-sama who cannot be joked with just as the rumors say. And, what do you want to ask? I will answer questions positively other than my age and my weight.」

「Who are you really? Why did you accept a position like being the captain of the Seven Dragon Paladins when you have amassed a massive wealth in one generation?」

「Aa, wait wait. You are going to ask three questions at once? From here on ahead, you might have to pay various things yourself for the answer you know?」



After Magialca said that somewhat hurriedly, Celis began to think for a while.

If the number of questions were limited, then what should she ask the most?

「Even so, your questions are really frank and sharp. If you pressed me that straightforwardly, even I will be perplexed of how to answer.」

Magialca smiled with a troubled look.

「Well, there is no doubt that I'm in the opposite spectrum of you who harden yourself with discipline and acts like a splendid noble.」

After telling that boastfully, Magialca started to toy with her orange hair that was tied into loops.

「Even though I look like this, I'm an orphan. My parents who failed in business abandoned the child me. After that, through many twists and turns, my relative, an uncle who was a martial artist adopted me and taught me the art. This weird way of speaking was also inherited from him.」 (TN: Magialca's way of speaking sounded like from the old generation in the raw)

「.....」

「Fortunately, I had talent. I absorbed and learned his techniques in the blink of an eye. And then when I became competent enough and reached a certain age, my aspiration towards commerce couldn't be stopped.」

「Were you burdened with your parents' debt?」

「No.」

Magialca silently shook her head.

「I cannot say that I had no resentment at all about how I was abandoned. As expected I also had lingering attachment. Besides, if my parents were still alive in the world of commerce, perhaps I will be able to meet them again on that stage. I also put such hope in my work.」

「Then, could it be that hairstyle is—」

It suited her, but it was a strange hairstyle that vaguely looked childish.

Perhaps her hairstyle and also her looks that looked like a young girl despite her age might be because she was instinctually preserving her youthful

appearance in order to make it easier for her parents to find her.

Such unrealistic imagination crossed Celis's mind.

「There was no need for that anymore though.」

But, Magialca smiled bitterly as though to deny that imagination.

「Then, don't tell me—」

「It's just as you guess. My parents already died. I was told that they were tricked by their business rival and made to obtain fake treasure. It seemed they abandoned me as a child in order to distance me from their debt. Well, later I would locate the culprit and purge them. Of course, it was by the way of our side.」

Magialca grinned and formed a circle with her thumb and index finger.

From that gesture, Celis could imagine that she meant she crushed them on the same stage of 『commerce』.

「After that, well, most of it is just like what you can hear from the rumors. Drag-Rides were discovered, and this world was developed rapidly. Fortunately I was able to get involved with the Ruin investigations of several countries. I switched my business to the new weapon before others could at the right timing, and amassed a vast fortune. Me becoming the representative of the Marcafal Kingdom was because I lent that country quite the sum of money.」

「Is that so..... However I don't understand. You have obtained fortune and fame, and you have also cleared your parents' regret. And yet why, you sought even the position of the Seven Dragon Paladins?」

It seemed Celis wondered about Magialca's past and she asked with a quiet expression.

In response the woman with a young girl appearance answered with a smile that was filled with implication.

「Hou. Do you think I'm greedy? But you see, that's the way it is for a merchant you know? And when I take the challenge of being the captain of the Seven Dragon Paladins, look. Just as you can see in the present situation, there is a chance I will even be able to obtain treasure from the so called Avalon, isn't

that right?」

「That's not what I mean. Even without you intentionally braving danger, you will be able to live safely just from doing business? That's what I'm wondering about.」

After Celis interrupted with such argument, Magialca smiled mysteriously.

「What, it's not something that complicated. This is just my disposition. Always earning, profiting, and increasing my fortune, that is my purpose in life. Such humans also exist in this world. Rather, I believe it's someone like you, someone who is fighting as a righteous noble for the sake of a country and its people, who is more uncommon in this world you know?」

「.....So, it's something like that.」

「In any case, I'm fighting for the sake of my own desires. Me making a move on your sweetheart is also a part of that.」

「That's, are you saying that you are intending to use Lux?」

Celis's eyes blinked from getting taken aback by those words that were like a surprise attack.

「Or rather, what do you mean by sweetheart!? I, it's not like, I'm—」

「No one mentioned the name of Lux or anyone else just now though.」

「Kuh.....!?」

Celis was at a loss for words in front of Magialca's obscene smile.

「Although, don't fret. It's not like I'm intending to take away and devour that boy. If it's in a sexual meaning then I will, but in the first place that fellow is a more competent man than his appearance suggests. Certainly he also has a side that is too softhearted but—even if it's a hypocritical virtuousness, but someone who can persist with it is a hero.」

「.....That's, what could you mean by that?」

Magialca tilted her wine glass sharply into her mouth, then she showed a flushed face from drunkenness.

「If you don't notice then it will be more convenient if I don't say it but, today

I'm feeling good so I'll answer. Lux Arcadia. In a sense, that fellow is already lifting up the evaluation for himself in this Ruin conquering. And that is with a different method from me the captain and that snobby vice captain.]

Lux was surpassing the captain Magialca and the Blue Tyrant Singlen in one aspect.

That was what Magialca said in a roundabout way.

「Lux, did?」

Celis who heard that was bewildered and tilted her head.

However thinking carefully, some things also came to her mind.

「If it's you then you must know really well. Your Academy, how is it going there right now?」

「That's—.....-!?」

Here Celis finally noticed the meaning of Magialca's insinuation.

「Have you noticed? Someone who was originally a criminal of the Old Empire that committed all kinds of atrocities. Someone like that barged into a girl's academy, and yet before anyone knows it, that fellow has become an indispensable existence not just in that academy—but also in the New Kingdom. Miraculously that Princess of the New Kingdom was able to detect that talent huh.」

Lux's true talent and achievements when his achievements as a Drag-Knight were hidden.

No—his qualities as a king that couldn't be exhibited until now.

It was a strength that he used to reach an understanding, first with Lisha, and then with Celis who opposed him at first and the other students, making them into his allies one after another.

「Lux's way of doing things that won't hurt others as much as possible and interacts with them without discrimination takes monumental effort to carry out, and it's a reckless method that hurts himself too. But if his method works and he can reach an understanding with the other party, then his allies will increase. He has already obtained considerable trust from Greifer of the

Vanheim Principality, Mel of the Ymir Theocracy, and Rosa of the Heiburg Republic. Of course it's not like they became his collaborators officially, but this is still something that can be called as a substantial accomplishment.]

Magialca hummed as though to show a great admiration.

In a glance she looked like someone with a fickle personality, but as expected her observing eyes couldn't be underestimated.

「In other words, Lux is essentially in the process of becoming the core of the Seven Dragon Paladins, is that what you are saying?」

Singlen who attempted to make other powerful people obey using achievements and strength.

Magialca who reigned at the top using money and authority.

Looking at the whole, their way might be more skillful, but in the current situation, Lux was in the process of changing the situation where he could conduct himself advantageously at the very least.

And that was by Lux's own achievements that he obtained through his battles until now.

「Well, it's something like that. That kind of hero who comes out from a fairy tale often charms a lot of people. Well, people like me and that snob are an exception though. We won't be charmed with ordinary methods.」

「.....?」

Celis was perplexed seeing Magialca erase her smile until now and showed a forbidding look.

「By snob, do you mean Sir Singlen? Is he going to try something with Lux —?」

「Who knows. I don't know about that guy's scheme.」

Magialca played the fool, however she made a wicked smile that vaguely showed her inner feelings.

「.....But, I understand about that guy's aim in general. That's including his final goal.」

「What in the world could it—」

Celis tensed nervously. In response Magialca suddenly let out a sigh and lied down on the bed with a relaxed posture.

「Is that your last question? If you want to ask about that then you can ask me again on the last day of this two week period. And then during that time, can you also answer the questions of this me?」

Magialca smiled as though to say she wasn't giving Celis a choice.

She was answering her questions generously until now was a lead up in order to pull out information from Celis.

(As expected.....I cannot be careless with this person.)

Even so, with how worried she was about Lux, she surely couldn't help but ask the question.

「More importantly, can I request you to have a bout with me for a bit with a Drag-Ride and hand-to-hand combat? It will be fine even if it is after we arrive in the Malcafari Kingdom. I wish to be allowed to use this chance to take a lesson from the true strength of you who is Philuffy's master and also the captain of the Seven Dragon Paladins.」

「Hohou. Looks like you have grown a bit after getting rubbed by Lux huh.」

Magialca who heard that opened her eyes wide in surprise for the first time.

「Wha-!? I, I haven't really been rubbed or anything! That's because of some accidents, such thing happened inevitably several times but—」

「No one was asking anything like that.....」

The captain retorted while unusually making a fixed stare.

However, Magialca could read Celis's aim from making a pretext to challenge her. If things went well for her, she was going to ask her about the talk just now as the reward for her victory.

(As expected from this diligent and famous girl. She is growing from being at Lux's side.)

That day ended peacefully while she was feeling amazed of Lux's influence once more.

—But, at this time the two of them actually made a miscalculation.

They made light of Singlen, thinking that no matter what kind of plan he had for Lux, he wouldn't cause anything during this period of aide exchange.

That assumption in itself was a great mistake on their part.

Episode 3 – Imperial Command of the Queen

Part 1

It was a tranquil day with sunlight filtering through trees.

Amidst the sleepy atmosphere, early in the afternoon.

An old soldier with a tall and lean body frowned hearing the sounds of a sword fight from afar.

Fortress city Cross Field, first block.

At a small practice ground that was set up near the government office building made of stone, the thirty members of the White Ridge knight order led by Singlen were doing Drag-Ride training.

Singlen came here with the pretext of doing a regular inspection.

After the number of Ruins that hadn't been conquered became three, the members of the Seven Dragon Paladins had the duty to watch the situation so they could give as much backup as possible to any faction.

It was called a duty, but in actuality it was something like a check so that no side would try to steal a march.

「I have grown old to doze off like this.」

The old soldier, Zweigbergk smiled wryly while heading to outside the building.

He was walking through the corridor that was illuminated with faint light while recalling a memory from the past.

It was a memory from more than twenty years ago.

A memory at his home country, the Blackend Kingdom—

—

「Sword Saint Zweigbergk. I want you to accept the position of being the private tutor of Earl Shelbrit house starting from the following month.」

Inside the rustic castle made of stone, within a room that had red tapestry hanging down.

Zweigbergk who was serving as the captain of the royal guard was suddenly told about his dismissal in the audience hall one day.

「Does that mean I have served my purpose? I have no memory of offending the ministers in politics to that degree though.」

- Murmur*, the sentence of Zweigbergk that he muttered with a fearless smile caused the lined up officials to stir.

Although he was the knight captain under the direct control of the kingdom, his remark was still too disrespectful for a mere knight.

It displayed his relationship with the king, at the same time it also showed that this retirement was something that he didn't consent to.

In fact it was exactly like that.

Since Zweigbergk was appointed as the captain of this country's knight order, his accomplishments were endless, like subduing insurrections altogether and so on.

Indeed his age had reached the middle of his forty, but it was a suitable age if it was in his capacity as commander—no, even in plain swordsmanship and stamina he hadn't showed any sign of declining, he was a matchless general who couldn't be matched by anyone.

And yet despite that, he was ordered to retire. Zweigbergk happened to have an idea about the reason.

(This looks like the misgivings of the influential people. There is no way they will be happy knowing that someone like a general that is staying for nearly

thirty years in the castle is nearby.....huh.)

Although there would be small skirmishes with other countries occasionally, the situation was generally peaceful because their distance from the Old Empire was quite far.

At present, when the public order also wasn't bad, the existence of a powerful knight would be unmanageable for the statesmen by that much.

For the young king who had just taken over the throne, the presence of this veteran knight would make him unable to maintain his dignity.

「But, it will be regrettable if your skill is left to rust, can I ask you to lend your strength in order to nurture the next generation?」

「Fuh..... Private tutor for Earl Shelbrit's house is it, certainly they are a prestigious family but—」

Zweigbergk scornfully laughed in his heart.

House of Shelbrit was a noted family that descended from the royal family and had produced knights for many generations. From that description it sounded nice, but if his memory served him right, that family's behavior wasn't decent.

The earl that was a feudal lord collected taxes pointlessly and did wild merrymaking, surrounding himself with a lot of mistresses.

He was ridiculed by his surroundings from misusing his authority. It was a house of a stereotypical debauched feudal lord.

However, although Zweigbergk had a rough and bold personality by nature, he couldn't turn his back on the imperial command of the king.

When he went to the earl's territory reluctantly the next month, it was a terrible place that surpassed his imagination.

The public order was the worst because the feudal lord lived extravagantly and didn't do his work.

He held banquets in his ridiculously large stately mansion almost everyday. His several estates that were located in distance were being managed by his sons, but even they had fallen into depravity as a matter of course.

They were only busying themselves with alcohol, woman, and then hunting.

The heirs who were still very young were picking on and beating the servants and maids.

(Calling this a garbage dump won't be enough.)

If it was like this then naturally Zweigbergk also couldn't be properly motivated.

A few days after staying there, while he was cutting corners in giving lessons and swordsmanship instructions, he suddenly happened to encounter a certain sight inside the grounds of the earl's mansion.

「Whoops, watch out, the tutor old man is here!」

「Let's go! Oi, ooold man! We were only playing just now! Don't you go tattle on anyone!」

Several children who were making vulgar expressions were running away from the courtyard.

It seemed they were bullying a fellow son of the earl.

Furthermore it was siblings, an elder sister and younger brother who were the children of a mistress who had died from sickness.

(If I remember right their names are—)

The elder sister's name was Marche, the little brother's name was Singlen.

He thought those were their names, but he wasn't particularly motivated to remember their names.

「Can you stand? I'll lend you a hand. I'll warn those two later.」

The boy looked like he was around ten years old. Zweigbergk offered his hand to the young boy, but his words were a lie.

They weren't children who would listen even if he warned them anyway, so he wouldn't bother to do something pointless.

He only said that on the surface simply because of his obligation, but the boy smiled.

「Thank you for your consideration. But—your assistance is unnecessary.」

「——」

The boy called Singlen was a timid existence who wouldn't resist even when several of his older brothers hit him.

That first impression was overwritten with a strange out of place feeling the moment he saw the boy's smile.

Something was strange.

Although he was thinking so at the corner of his mind, at that time he couldn't give words to it and left from there.

When he went to bed that day, Zweigbergk suddenly noticed.

That behind the boy, there was his sickly elder sister looking uneasy.

And then, while the boy himself was covered all over with bruises, his face, his stomach, his essential vital spots could be said to be completely uninjured.

「Don't tell me, he intentionally let them hit him?」

In order to defend himself and cover his elder sister from the attack of his elder brothers from different mothers, he purposefully acted insolent and took the role of being a punching bag.

Furthermore his own body wasn't significantly injured, he handled the attack with only his dynamic vision.

「—Interesting. Just when I thought that I'll spend my remaining years in boredom as a private tutor.」

Zweigbergk found something to look forward to for the first time as this house's private tutor. After that he gave every kind of special education to Singlen outside of the public's eyes.

He was different from the other heirs. He studied diligently and grew strong in the blink of an eye, even so he didn't strike back at his incompetent elder brothers.

Of course Zweigbergk wasn't dissatisfied, he also didn't instigate him by saying things like 『Why don't you fight back even though you can win』.

It wasn't because he was devoted to his professional duties, but because he had seen through Singlen's true nature that was like a hawk hiding its talons.

He understood that even if he won temporarily against his elder brothers' violence, sooner or later he would meet a counterattack that was entangled with authority.

He pretended to be powerless until he could establish his own strength.

One day he would surely take over this depraved earl house with pure strength and wit.

(How many years will it be until he rises up, I wonder?)

Such prediction and imagination of Zweigbergk was betrayed in less than a few months later.

It wasn't like that boy was particularly waiting for the day to turn the tables.

While Singlen was away, his elder sister was hit and lost her eyesight. In less than three weeks after that—the serfs within the territory revolted, and the earl's house was enveloped in flames.

The step brothers who hit the elder sister were all killed without exception, while Singlen and his sister escaped outside.

Zweigbergk noticed that belatedly.

Singlen's ploy that raised the revolt and guided them through the hole in the mansion's security.

From the beginning, he was able to destroy the family anytime.

He simply didn't bother to do it until now, whether it was simply because of his whim, or because of his composure—

A few days later he reunited with the siblings, and when he pointed that out, Singlen smiled without any guilt.

「And, do you intend to throw me into prison, Zwei-sensei?」

The boy looked up at his teacher with an insolent smile till the end. In response, Zweigbergk shook his head.

In exchange he bowed his head and spoke.

「—I wish to be allowed to witness your path of supremacy.」

He said.

He swore his loyalty not to a prodigy who appeared every one hundred years, but to an inhuman monster with unknown depth.

Like that the relationship of the two continued until now.

It didn't change even after that terrifying incident that occurred in the Blackend Kingdom.

「.....」

When Zweigbergk came back to himself, he saw Singlen having light practice against the knight order members in the practice ground.

The practice ground was a small space with ring shape that was surrounded by solid ramparts.

There, a knight order member wearing Wyvern was swinging his sword in full strength, sometimes he would pull his gun's trigger, but Singlen who was piloting a Drake wasn't even grazed.

If that was all, then it wouldn't be something particularly surprising but,

「Vice captain-dono. That's, what is he doing? How can Sir Singlen dodge with his eyes closed?」

When he noticed, a rookie member was standing beside him. He was muttering with a dumbfounded tone.

「It's the lord's secret technique, Battle Array – Moon Reflection. By touching the opponent's Drag-Ride using Wire Tail, he can predict the enemy's next movement through the mechanical sound of the Drag-Ride.」

The internal driving force of a Drag-Ride would move the frame before causing the next movement.

But, predicting that with only sound and vibration could be called as a superhuman special move.

Since Ruins were discovered more than ten years ago, Zweigbergk had also acquired skill that wouldn't put shame on the title Sword Saint, but Singlen's

talent was in a different dimension.

Zweigbergk answered indifferently while walking towards his lord who had finished training.

「Just as my lord expected, Queen Raffi is heading to Cross Field. I believe that she is likely intending to have a secret talk. There is no progress with the search of Dragon Marauder and the Moon.」

「I see.」

「What should we do? Lux Arcadia is taking action that is deviating from my lord's predictions. If it stays like this, even the possibility to exceed Magialca's position will be—」

「Kukuku, isn't that something joyous instead? If that man surpasses my expectations, then we can even just have him become hero as it is. The hero who save this world.」

In contrast his lord, Singlen Shelbrit was grinning fearlessly.

More than ten years after that, there were various incidents and his elder sister too had departed from this world.

The man who constantly hid his fangs tore off the chains binding him and transformed into the Blue Tyrant.

He didn't try to hide his true strength and changed his method to dominate over other people by a display of strength.

(—Even so, there is just one thing that is still the same.)

Those who touched the scale of the dragon called Singlen, would meet ruin with certainty. (TN: In Japan there is a saying of touching the scale of a dragon, which means offending someone so badly.)

「By your will. Then I will proceed as planned.」

Zweigbergk shivered at the bottom of his heart towards this terrifying existence.

But, for some reason, he also felt similar fear towards that man called Lux too.

Part 2

In the end, the match between Yoruka and Coral ended in a draw. They guarded him alternately depending on the situation, but unexpectedly this situation started to function well.

Lux thought that the aide exchange program itself possessed an aspect of sounding out the other country's intentions, but it would be hard for Coral to do that because he had to be by Lux's side as his guard, and above all else the female students who didn't know anything about the situation would constantly hound Coral and follow him around.

Lux thought that it would be somewhat calmer when he was with a fellow male, but contrary to his expectations, they gathered even more attention instead.

「How should I say it, Lux-kun has it hard, don't you? If it's like this, it might be better if I also dressed as a girl.」

Even Coral who usually showed a good appearance on the outside now looked dead tired. Seeing him like that, Lux smiled wryly while realizing once more that his situation was abnormal.

It was scary to get used to it like this.....

While thinking such things in the corner of his mind, he was doing chores of cleaning falling leaves at the courtyard after school.

The falling leaves of late Autumn were piling up everywhere, but soon the leaves would also become few.

While he was doing the work silently with Coral's help, a voice suddenly called from behind.

「Oooi, Lux. Over here, here! Leave the work to that transfer student and come inside.」

「What's the matter, Lisha-sama?」

Without him noticing, Lisha was in front of the atelier's door.

When the sudden call caused Lux to wonder, Lisha folded her arms while facing aside with puffed up cheeks.

「What do you mean what's the matter? Even though Krulcifer and Celis are finally gone, don't get too occupied with your chores. You are my knight after all. There is a confidential talk. Come here right away.」

「Ah, that atelier is the place where Drag-Ride development takes place, isn't it? Is it okay if I have a look too?」

「Rejected. It's an important secret, so outsiders aren't allowed to enter.」

Seeing Lisha's curt attitude, Lux smiled awkwardly.

「That's, is it no good even if just for a bit? I think Coral can be trusted.」

「That's not it! There is also another talk! Plainly speaking, it's a talk about official business!」

「Ah.....」

When Lisha spoke impatiently like that after seeing Lux's attitude, Coral stiffened with a complicated smile.

「That's, I'll finish the cleaning of the leaves so, don't mind me.」

Lux noticed Coral's consideration and he entered inside the atelier. There, he smelled the familiar scent of metal and oil.

Everything was the same until that point, but during the time when he didn't visit here for a while, there was a certain change inside.

「This is, the three types of general purpose Drag-Rides? But, they don't look like the Triad's Drag-Rides.」

Lux suddenly saw three Drag-Rides at the depths of the atelier and he tilted his head.

The flying type Wyvern, the land battle type Wyrm, the special equipment type Drake. Those three types, but each of them had subtly different shapes from normal.

「It's really sharp of you to notice my new technology. Well, in the end they can only be used for my Tiamat, but they are powerful for sure.」

If it was just simple reinforcement, there was already the『EX』type that was the reinforced model of general purpose Drag-Rides.

However, these three Drag-Rides here were disassembled from normal Drag-Rides, and then they were recombined into a different shape. They gave the image that they couldn't function by themselves.

「.....Is that so?」

「Fufu, are you curious? But it's still a secret. I will use it when the time comes and make you astonished then.」

(She looks like she really wants me to ask.....)

Seeing Lisha who was folding her arms while puffing out her chest, Lux smiled wryly in his heart.

But, right now his sense of duty as Lisha's personal knight won over his curiosity.

「And, what is this official business about? I heard that at the end of the year, there will be a banquet where the Four Great Nobles are gathered though—」

Regarding that, Lux would attend as long as there was no emergency business.

But the talk this time seemed like it wouldn't be about that.

「That's—you see. A bit after this, ^{Mother} Haha-ue will come to do an inspection of the Academy. At that time, you will be together with me to greet her.」

「Her majesty Queen Raffi will?」

Lux was surprised in his heart hearing Lisha's words.

Although the distance from the royal capital until here wasn't too far, but it was quite a distance.

For her to come directly in this kind of season with a strange timing, there was a possibility that it was about an important talk that couldn't be conveyed through letter or messenger.

「I was told that Haha-ue absolutely wants you to be present at the talk too. It will be great if it isn't bad news but—」

Lisha was usually filled with energy, but when it was time for official business as a Princess, she would sometimes show her unconfident appearance.

Lux knew that the cause was the events of her past.

That was why Lux smiled like usual to reassure Lisha.

「Don't worry. I believe Lisha-sama has done really well. About the case of Babel this time too, you protected Triport while I was absent.」

「I, is that so? Really?」

Lisha's cheeks blushed red and she looked up at Lux happily.

As always it was lovely how her expression could quickly change so drastically.

「Yes, it's true. Lisha-sama is a princess that I'm proud to serve.」

「Lux..... The, then, the reward for last time—」

「Eh.....?」

Lux was bewildered at her sudden words.

But, for some reason Lisha was fidgeting while her gaze was wandering around shyly.

「That's, I noticed when last time you went on a trip with that airhead girl. Simply waiting without being able to go to meet up is really lonely. That's why, I have to start by my own initiative.」

「Lisha, sama?」

「Co, come on quickly!? I heard from somewhere that a man mustn't make a woman wait.」

「Eerr..... I, I get it.」

Lux was carried away by the flow without understanding what was demanded from him and walked towards her.

Seeing Lisha who was acting different from usual, Lux's heart was pounding hard while he caressed Lisha's soft head.

In addition to her adorableness and loveliness that was like a small animal, the prettiness of her red eyes looking up at him caused him to unconsciously stare in fascination.

「Thi, this isn't what I mean but, well, it's fine I guess. I also like this enough.....」

It seemed that what he did was different from what Lisha had in mind, but it seemed she was satisfied somehow.

(As I thought, Lisha-sama is cute.)

She was really close to him since their first meeting so he tended to forget but, now he reconfirmed once more that similar to his other close friends, she was also a really charming girl.

Thanks to Celis breaking his sense of values that would be unduly distant somewhat towards others, the way he looked at Lisha as an object of respect had also slightly changed now.

Until now Lisha prioritizing to tune and repair Lux's Drag-Ride over her own, too, might be the flip side of her genuine fondness towards him.

(Such thing, it's just my overly convenient thinking I think.)

Lux smiled wryly and immediately erased that thought.

He must not get any strange ideas towards the girls who were close to him.

He was still a criminal from the imperial family of the Old Empire in the middle of a mission.

At the very least, he couldn't lose focus until he saved the New Kingdom from the Sacred Eclipse as a Seven Dragon Paladin in three months time.

(But—if that's over)

Recently, there was a part of him that was thinking of such thing in a corner of his heart.

Seeing Lisha who allowed her head to be caressed looking like she was enjoying it even despite the embarrassment that she seemed to feel, Lux continued doing what he did in a daze. It was then,



「Lisha-sama and Lux-chiii! Her majesty has arrived here! Leave behind the Drag-Rides and come to the headmaster's office ASAAAP!」

「—!?」

Lux who returned to his senses from Tillfur's voice exchanged glances with Lisha in surprise.

After staring at each other with serious faces for a few seconds, they smiled wryly with a troubled look.

「Good grief, even though we were finally at a good place. As I thought it's really hard being a princess.」

「I will help you, Lisha-sama.」

After Lux said that soothingly, he quickly presented his hand.

Lisha took his hand a bit shyly, then the two of them started walking towards the headmaster's office.

Part 3

While heading towards the headmaster's office, there were already a lot of guards in front of the room.

It seemed that Relie temporarily excused herself, and inside there were only the Queen and her assistant.

When they entered after receiving permission, the nostalgic face of the Queen was there along with her aide, the prime minister Nulph.

「Looks like you are in good health, Lisha. I have heard about your efforts even at the royal capital.」

Perhaps because this time she came here with the pretext of inspecting the Academy, Queen Raffi was wearing a dress that wasn't too showy. She first faced Lisha and smiled at her.

As always, she was a woman with manner that wasn't typical of a queen in a good meaning.

She didn't have the dominating aura that overwhelmed other people, but she possessed gentleness and intellectual grace.

In response, Lux and Lisha first kneeled towards her, then Lisha gave her greetings formally.

「It's my delight to hear that your majesty. To be able to bask in the glory of your royal visit at this chance—」

「There is no need for the stiff greeting. This place is not the audience hall after all.」

「Then, long time no see, Haha-ue.」

After Lisha spoke really tensely, Lux also lifted up his face next.

「It has been a long time your majesty. It's great that you are in good health.」

「Yes, you too have a very good look now on your face. Compared to five years ago when we first parted, now you look far more lively.」

Hearing those words, Lux slightly recalled five years ago.

Lux who was captured as a survivor of the imperial family was given amnesty and released. He was given permission to travel around the New Kingdom as the Chore Prince while chasing after Fugil with the status of a criminal just as Lux wished.

It was the arrangement of Raffi who was the wife of Count Atismata, because she knew the circumstances.

Lux could spend his time in peace and tranquility like now was also because of the existence of Raffi who took over the country as queen.

While recalling such thing, Raffi started to talk about the present situation.

First was about the conspicuous service of Lux and Lisha that had saved the New Kingdom several times.

The state of affairs of the New Kingdom including the Ruins. The situation regarding the Lords including other countries. The tentative settlement regarding the case of Heiburg.

All those situations were working out somehow right now, and in the present when the Ruins investigation was halted, there was no big problem occurring.

「This too is all thanks to you, Lux. I'm really grateful that you are giving your all for the sake of the New Kingdom.」

After she concisely finished that talk, Raffi said her thanks once more.

「I'm honored, your majesty.」

In response, Lux also answered respectfully. For some reason Lisha beside him also puffed up her chest proudly as though it was her who was thanked.

—But here, words that could be said as predictable in a sense came to him.

「Incidentally Lux, I wish to ask you one thing, how much do you know about the secret of the Old Empire?」

She was asking that with a relaxed attitude without any particular change in

her manner.

That more than anything was what caused Lux and Lisha to harbor nervousness.

「.....I had told all the facts that I knew that day when the revolution ended. Until now I had also reported the information related to the Old Empire that I obtained after that without omitting anything.」

Not just the matter about Hayes, even the matter of the Lords when they appeared led by Fugil, Lux reported all important information related to the Old Empire without hiding anything.

It was only the information about the name of the Holy Arcadia Empire that came out from the ancient document of the Ruins that Airi deciphered that wasn't reported right away, but then it became a common knowledge among the leaders of each country and the senior statesmen of the New Kingdom after the world summit.

While Lux was waiting for a reply timidly, Raffi smiled wryly and loosened her expression.

「Please don't worry. I am not doubting you at all. It's just, there is one thing from the past that is a puzzle no matter what.」

「That is—」

When Lux asked that question, prime minister Nulph who was waiting opened the lock of the jewel box he was holding.

Inside the box that was securely safeguarded, a transparent crystal about as big as a human's head, a Grand Force was placed.

「—!？」

「Her majesty wishes to ask once more, whether you know anything about this.」

Prime Minister Nulph asked with a tone that was rigid and tense, but calm to the end.

Seeing him along with Lisha turn stiff while holding their breaths, Queen Raffi continued the talk.

「A giant crystal was discovered in the treasure warehouse when the Old Empire was destroyed. At the time we didn't know what this thing was, but there was only a note left behind that this is something important in regards to the Ruins.」

After that, thinking about the investigation of this crystal, it was decided for the Academy in Cross Field to manage it due to its close proximity to a Ruin and also because it had a combat force nearby.

—But, after that due to Saniya who was a spy of the illegal arms dealer Hayes investigating about it, the New Kingdom held suspicion about the crystal. Then along with the arrival of the Lords, the mystery of the crystal's existence became clear.

It was a key to open the path towards that land where the legacy of the ancient era was sleeping—Avalon. An important item that was hidden within the body of one of the seven Ragnarok.

「According to my and Nulph's thinking, we are guessing that perhaps this came from the sixth Ruin, Garden that is nearby this Cross Field.」

After taking into account the present situation, that was the only natural conclusion.

Seeing that it was sleeping inside the treasure warehouse of the Old Empire, nine out of ten, this Grand Force could be hypothesized to be something that came from within the New Kingdom's territory.

And then, right now, after the Grand Forces of Babel and Ark had been recovered from each Ragnarok there and installed at those Ruins' deepest part, by the process of elimination there was a high possibility that this was the Grand Force for the Garden.

「Honestly speaking, at that time we couldn't even imagine that this crystal is a treasure that influences the fate of the world. Besides, thinking about the danger of a thief like Dragon Marauder aiming for it, I believe that the decision to not give this information even to other countries was not a mistake.」

Queen Raffi continued matter-of-factly looking vaguely at a loss.

Lux was also in agreement regarding that.

「But, the situation changed too drastically in these few months.」

Prime Minister Nulph added.

The descendant of the ancient people, the Lords declared that an act of betrayal like hiding information regarding the Ruins investigation would be crushed thoroughly. It had become a situation where they couldn't tell at this late hour that they were in possession of something really important like a Grand Force from the very beginning.

「In other words, we already cannot just reveal this honestly—」

Nulph nodded to Lisha's straightforward question.

「The traitor that the Lords mentioned also hasn't been discovered, and Dragon Marauder is also going strong. In this situation where every country is maintaining the equilibrium, if we show that kind of opening, we might be accused of betrayal. After all every country has already invested a lot of funds and soldiers for conquering the Ruins.」

The liberation of Avalon was nearing—if the ancient technology and treasure were made clear, the possibility that another country would take advantage of this flaw of the New Kingdom couldn't be denied.

「Then, what should we.....」

When Lisha was about to say that, Queen Raffi silently turned her gaze towards the window that took a whole side of the wall.

「We thought of a countermeasure. We will talk about this from now. Can I rely on you two for this?」

Like that Queen Raffi presented a top secret mission to escape from this responsibility and made it acceptable for the New Kingdom to possess the Grand Force.

Naturally Lux and Lisha couldn't refuse. The plan would be carried out under their leadership in ten more days.

Part 4

「Fuu.....」

Before noon, right after the briefing session was finally over.

Lux was walking in the corridor of the Academy after school while leaking out a sigh. Beside him Coral's eyes opened wide in puzzlement.

Within the two weeks schedule, Yoruka would be in charge of guarding Lux whether in the morning or the afternoon each day. Today's morning was Coral's turn, so he met Lux as soon as the talk was over.

When Lux hurriedly put his hand on his mouth, Coral made a teasing smile.

「That's no good you know, Lux-kun. If you sigh, happiness will escape from there. That was what Greifer said.」

「Greifer did?」

Lux tilted his head because it didn't match his image of that peevish young man.

「Yep. I was the one who taught him though, persistently at that.」

Lux also smiled wryly hearing Coral's next line.

(That was dangerous. I almost mentioned about the matter just now.)

The top secret mission that was requested by Queen Raffi naturally could not be told to Coral who was an outsider—no, not just him, but even to all the other people in the Academy.

Because Lux's fatigue due to Over Limit's backlash was strong, originally he wanted to take it easy, but in reality the matter that he had to think about had become big.

After that Lisha and Raffi had a talk between parent and child privately, so Lux got out of the room early, but—this mission was quite difficult.

「Excuse me. We have something to talk for a bit with the both of you. Can you two accompany..... not that, receive a request from us?」

While Lux was thinking of such thing, some female students suddenly called out to them.

Lux knew their faces, they were in the same year as him. But he wasn't really close to them.

Lux somehow sensed that it would be troublesome from the curiosity and expectation that were reflected in their eyes, but if they said that it was a request, he had no choice but to listen.

Lux showed a complicated smile while he was going to reply to the girls, but then Coral quickly walked to the front.

「I'm sorry. Lux-kun is now doing a different request. But if you girls don't mind if it's with me, then I'll do the chore in his place, is it alright with you all?」

「Eh, is, is it okay!? We are also interested in Coral-kun, then—perhaps it's alright?」

The girl in the front who seemed to be the leader asked her surroundings. She received agreement from them and settled the talk.

Lux stiffened from the sudden development, Coral whispered into his ear with a small voice.

「And so, I will also do Lux-kun's chore. I know how your personality is, but it's no good to listen to everything you know? Resting is also a job.」

「Coral.....」

Coral winked with the air of knowing everything and he was led away by the girls.

Lux felt gratitude to Coral's heartfelt consideration, then suddenly he felt a presence behind him.

「I'm sorry to have made you wait, Aruji-sama—」

Come to think of it, it was Yoruka's turn to guide him for today's afternoon. When he turned around towards her, something shocking entered his eyes.

「.....Wait, Yoruka!?」

「Yes. It's me, Aruji-sama.」

She gave a pleasant and carefree smile just like usual, but Lux was dumbfounded and stiffened.

It was shocking.

She wasn't wearing that showy and mysterious black outfit, and not the Academy's uniform either.

On her hair wasn't the usual red ribbon but a white Alice band. She was wearing a frilly dress with black base color.

Her hand was holding a large musical instrument case. Lux somehow guessed that the content was a Sword Device, but someone who met her for the first time surely wouldn't guess that.

Her figure that was unified with a wholly elegant design was exactly like the figure of a noble young lady.

That appearance which he had never even dreamed about caused Lux to become speechless.

「Err, what's going on? That appearance.....」

After a full few seconds later, he asked her once more.

「Headmaster Relie prepared this for me. She said that it will be better for me to have some civilian clothes—it doesn't suit me?」

「No, it looks really good on you— wait, it was Relie-san?」

Lux tilted his head due to the really curious connection.

Then, she told him how it was Philuffy's request through Relie towards Yoruka.

「She wants me to protect Aruji-sama in her place while she is in the middle of recuperation.」

「Phi-chan is.....I see.」

Lux's expression relaxed at Philuffy's usual consideration while feeling

convinced.

「I also received a message from the headmaster. It will become noisy somehow if it's in the Academy, so I should bring Aruji-sama to outside—」

Next, it seemed that Relie also told her that she could be relieved because if it was Yoruka, then there wouldn't be any development between the two of them.

Just what was she saying.....

「Right. Then this is a rare chance, so I think I'll accept the kind offer.」

Lux nodded smilingly like that, then right after that, Yoruka stiffened before the gate for some reason.

「.....What's wrong?」

When Lux tilted his head, the girl looked down and spoke with unusual hesitation.

「This is troubling. This is my first time going outside properly, so I don't know where to take Aruji-sama.」

「Wait, eeeeh!? You have never walked around Cross Field yet!?」

Even though it was already a few months since she came to the Academy.

「Of course, I have grasped the geography in general, but I don't know any place to entertain Aruji-sama. Speaking from the view point of security, I believe the best plan is to stay quiet in an inn but—」

「Haa.....」

Lux's shoulders dropped crestfallenly while he faced Yoruka once more.

「Could it be Yoruka, you have never played around properly?」

「Yes. Now that Aruji-sama mentioned it, that's the case.」

The girl muttered while tilting her head.

This was a serious illness.

—Or rather, perhaps the fault lay with Lux himself because he didn't really give a follow up to Yoruka in regards to her daily life.

Lux who concluded that decided to use this chance to bring her to look around the city.

「Then, this is a rare chance, so how about we go somewhere? If it's just a bit, then I also know some places where we can have fun.」

「.....」

Yoruka touched her lips with her index finger in a thinking posture, looking like she was somewhat in wonder.

Lux thought that she would surely refuse, but before long she showed a bright carefree smile and nodded.

「Then, please take care of me, Aruji-sama.」

「—Right.」

Her smile with her appearance of a lovely young lady caused Lux's heart to jump inside for a moment.

(As I thought, it's also the case in her normal outfit but, Yoruka is really a beauty huh.....) Usually it was hard to notice because of that peculiar getup and her mysterious atmosphere but, when she dressed up like this he thought of that once more.

Lux gently pulled her hand and started walking while harboring a mysterious feeling of exaltation and anxiety.

Part 5

First they had a light meal from a food cart. After that they visited a barn that was managed by an acquaintance of Lux.

Because he had done the chore of taking care of the horses before, he was able to get an agreement from the manager of the barn fairly easily.

「Ou, so you are walking around while bringing a different girl again, huh. Even so, the girl this time is also amazingly pretty.....」

Lux was made fun of like that by a youth who he hadn't met for a long time while trying to show a horse to Yoruka.

Just in case, Lux made Yoruka promise to not kill the horse even if it rampaged, then he tried to make her feed the horse and pet it.

「It is calmer than expected. Besides—it's warm.」

Of course it would be hard for an amateur to ride a horse, so they didn't do that, but Yoruka somehow gazed at the horse with a satisfied look.

Next they headed to a small lake at the outskirts of the city.

In front of a cabin, there was an old man who was also Lux's acquaintance from doing chores. They borrowed fishing rods from him and went fishing at the lake.

「Fishing is one of the few pastimes that I did with my little brother so.....the presence of a fish is easy to sense.」

Perhaps it should be expected from someone who originated from an island country in the east.

The caught fish could also be brought home as a souvenir, but they presented their catch to the old man and left that place, then next they headed to a tailor shop.

It was the first request from Yoruka, but because Yoruka had almost no casual clothes of her own, they headed to a high class tailor shop.

Of course Lux was thinking of having her try out some clothes, and if there was anything that she liked, he would have the tailor make it for her.

Even though he looked like this, he had some money at hand from his earnings through Syvalles.

He couldn't waste money, but there would be no problem if it was just one outfit as a present.

「Aruji-sama, what kind of clothes do you like? I have no preference of my own.」

Yoruka asked him that when they entered the tailor shop.

At first he thought of making her chose what she liked, but he had no clue of what would be good, so thinking of clothes with a different impression from usual, he suggested to her about choosing something that gave a neat and clean impression.

「I have finished changing Aruji-sama. Please take a look.」

「Let's see—wait, eeeeeeh!?」

Yoruka beckoned Lux and he entered the changing room. Right at that moment Lux's head became pure white.

Naked—no, the girl in underwear appearance with an atmosphere that was different from usual was exposing her skin before Lux.

Her long glossy hair that was held by an Alice band, and the pure white lacy underwear and garter belt that were decorated with black ribbons looked dazzling in his eyes.

Not only was his gaze stolen by that sight unconsciously, she was emitting a seductive sex appeal that made him unable to tear off his gaze from her.

「Wait, what are you doing Yoruka!? Wear clothes properly—」

「My? I'm already wearing it. I asked the shop assistant for something that is as neat and clean as possible to answer Aruji-sama's taste you know?」

「I didn't intend to mean about underwear you know!? Just choose the clothing to wear on top of them!」

Yoruka's cheeks were dyed red in a blush. Lux faced her and yelled with a similarly red face.

「To choose only clothes with neat and clean style.....that means, Aruji-sama's preference is for me to not wear underwear then. If that's the case from now on I'll do so even at the Academy—」

「Stop it!? Since when has this become forcing me to do such embarrassment play!?」



「It can't be helped. I will follow the shop assistant's recommendation here.」

「Ah, right. With that—.....」

Lux averted his gaze in a fluster and left from there.

He thought that her atmosphere was different from usual, but in the end it was the usual Yoruka.

Lux let out a really conflicted sigh while waiting for the shopping to end.

Part 6

The sun set faster when it was Winter.

At the time of dusk, when the sun was almost sinking in the West, Lux and Yoruka were taking a break in the central plaza.

They bought fatty meat skewers from a food cart and ate it there while the people walking down the road were calling out to Lux one after another.

「Ou, ain't this Lux. Help me out next time again.」

「Oi you. Lux is already the Princess's knight. Good grief.」

A middle aged husband and wife conversed like that, then a slightly older youth manning a stall too, 「You are taking another beautiful girl again huh, introduce me to one at least.」

「Lux-kun too has become distant huuh.....」

There were also city girls looking up to the sky with a faraway look while saying such things.

In the end, it became noisy even when he went outside the Academy. Lux smiled wryly at that while responding to them, but there was just one thing that was decisively different from the past.

「You are trusted by everyone, Aruji-sama. It's not just your character—even your skill in Drag-Rides. That aspect is the difference between Aruji-sama and my little brother.」

Yoruka who was sitting down beside him suddenly smiled while saying that to him.

What was different from before, it was what Lux obtained from the Academy.

During his five years of doing chores, although he won over the trust from the people, they only thought of him as the Weakest Undefeated, a Drag-Knight

that wouldn't attack at all in his matches. But now he was renowned for having protected Syvalles and the Academy, and furthermore even Cross Field itself from the attacks of the Abyss, Ragnarok, and so on.

Right now Lux had become an existence that people acknowledged in admiration as a Drag-Knight who protected the New Kingdom, as well as someone who was chosen as Lisha's personal knight.

「I can be like this thanks to everyone. Of course, it's also thanks to you, Yoruka.」

However, Lux was thinking like that not from being modest.

He was able to wield his strength exactly because of the girls' consideration and cooperation with him.

「I—am?」

It seemed that Yoruka herself had no awareness of that. She tilted her head in puzzlement.

「The other day, when defeating the Ragnarok Metatron too, I heard that you stood up to face it many times even when it was an untouchable opponent due to the attack reflection. Thanks to that I was able to find the clue for defeating it and won.」

「It's something that I ought to feel embarrassed about. Originally, I had to remove the enemy approaching Aruji-sama instead of troubling you to take care of it.」

「Even so—I'm grateful to Yoruka. Thank you.」

He said that and took Yoruka's hand.

The cool and smooth skin texture felt pleasant. A mysterious bittersweet feeling overflowed in Lux's chest.

On the other hand Yoruka's serious face stared still without blinking at that hand.

「So, sorry. That's, for holding your hand for too long—ah.....」

When Lux said that and his hand was going to let go, Yoruka took his hand

instead without letting go.

「Aruji-sama's hand, is warm.」

Different from usual, she murmured with a faintly uplifted tone.

But, she immediately let go of his hand and smiled while looking at the setting sun.

「But—there is no time to enjoy that. My value lies solely in becoming a blade to destroy those who are aiming at Aruji-sama.」

「That's, when Yoruka's little brother died—」

Lux almost said that, but he then closed his mouth hurriedly.

While Yoruka was branded as a failure of a princess in the nation of Koto, she was granted with the position as the royal guard of her little brother, the candidate to become the next king.

But, her little brother was betrayed by his chief vassals and he was offered as a sacrifice.

The girl who was said to be disqualified as a human tried to discover the meaning of her life by clinging to the position of a tool as her little brother's servant but— Yoruka was made to realize that she had no qualification or anything for that, and so, as expected, she wasn't human or anything.

「Yes, I failed at that time. I was only thinking of myself. The fellows who tried to conveniently use my little brother who succeeded the throne while still young. Even though I vaguely felt apprehensions towards their existence and thought to get rid of them—」

Her tone was bland as though she was chatting casually about an everyday matter.

However, Yoruka smiled while emitting a vaguely bottomless aura.

Instantly a bad premonition was born inside Lux. When he noticed, he asked her.

「Could it be, your little brother, stopped you from doing.....?」

It wasn't like Lux had any inkling of what Yoruka was planning to do.

Lux was only thinking, that if by any chance, if Yoruka was going to try to do the same thing, then he himself would surely stop her too.

Yoruka didn't answer. She simply kept her mouth closed while her smile was deepening.

People were vanishing from the central plaza. At that time when the moon was hanging completely in the sky, Yoruka stood up.

「Let's go back, Aruji-sama. It won't be good for the body to stay in this cold air.」

「Ah, right. I, guess.....」

Yoruka who said that had already returned to her usual self.

But, different from when they had just set out, she didn't try to link her hand with his hand beside her anymore.

Lux softly called out to Yoruka instead of taking her hand from his own initiative.

「Say Yoruka. Since you came to the New Kingdom and entered the Academy, did anything change? Did you find anything important to you?」

「.....Nothing has changed. Aruji-sama's younger sister and Noct-san, then everyone in Syvalles has treated me well but, I'm still the same as ever.」

「.....I see.」

Lux murmured looking somewhat sad while he noticed that Yoruka sometimes was caressing her musical instrument case.

「That Sword Device is something really important for you isn't it?」

Even in the middle of the date she would keep holding it close to herself, the Sword Device of Yato no Kami.

He thought that in a sense it was an attachment that was just like her. Lux leaked out a wry smile unconsciously.

「In the end this is the only thing that I can understand. If it's a useful tool, then it's only reasonable for anyone to want to put it at their side and treasure it. Someone like me who is not a human can only understand something at that

level.]

That was why Yoruka earnestly continued to try to become Lux's 『useful tool』.

Surely it was something like that.

But—

「Is it, really like that?」

「Eh.....?」

Lux suddenly muttered the question emerging in his heart while they were on the path back to the Academy.

「The reason why Yoruka continues to be fixated on that sword, and also in being a servant. It might not simply be because you don't understand anything about humans. It could be that Yoruka yourself simply doesn't notice it too.」

「.....That's an interesting interpretation Aruji-sama.」

Yoruka's eyes opened wide in astonishment for a moment, then her eyes narrowed bewitchingly.

「But, someone like me cannot answer everyone's expectations. After all I'm just a mere thing in the end.」

「.....」

Her smile was bright as usual.

For such smile to look lonely no matter what to Lux might be just his imagination.

Even since this day, there was nothing particularly different in Yoruka's state even while she was striving in her guard duty that she did alternately with Coral.

And then, perhaps thanks to the two, or perhaps it was just a coincidence.

The period of rest was passing peacefully without any report of even a single Abyss showing up, not to mention any enemy like Dragon Marauder.

Like that, ten days later, the outing to Garden was finally carried out.

Part 7

During the afternoon on that day, in front of the fourth Drag-Ride hangar inside the Academy's grounds where the Drag-Rides were stored.

The elites of Syvalles were gathering in order to exterminate the Abyss that appeared from the Ruin.

Starting from the commanding officer Lisha, there were also Lux and Yoruka, then the members of the Triad, Sharis, Tillfur, and Noct.

Airi would also accompany them as a record keeper.

Philuffy as well as the remaining members of Syvalles would remain behind to protect the Academy.

Yoruka still hadn't been formally accepted into Syvalles, so this time she wouldn't accompany the investigation.

「The mission today is only light scouting, so there is no need to worry.」

After Lux told Yoruka that, she unexpectedly backed away obediently.

「Yes, if a danger is approaching Aruji-sama, then I will rush to your side in a flash no matter what.」

Lux nodded at Yoruka who answered him brightly, then he turned back towards Lisha and the others.

「This time's mission, you understand right, Lux?」

「Yes. I intend to pay meticulous attention to the situation.」

The top secret mission this time that was appointed to them from her majesty queen Raffi.

On the surface this outing had the pretext of exterminating the Abyss that appeared around Garden.

But, in actuality they had the aim of hiding the unidentified Grand Force that they were troubled about how to deal with inside Garden.

The scheme was for the New Kingdom to pretend that they had no such thing from the beginning while hiding it inside Garden, then next time when they went to conquer Garden, they would pick it up again.

So to speak it would be a put-up job, but Prime Minister Nulph also said that was the best way.

(Certainly, there is no other option for the New Kingdom than to avoid the suspicion of being a traitor by the other countries while leaving behind a clue for the Ruin's conquering, but—) Lux felt slightly reluctant to keep quiet about this matter even to Airi, the Triad, and also Yoruka.

「Then we are going! The destination is the surface of the sixth Ruin, Garden. We will only strike the Abyss that appear at the surroundings!」

In actuality, after removing the Abyss, they would bury the treasure box in the ground inside the Ruin, but Lisha declared the start of the mission without informing the others of that. Then suddenly a voice came from behind.

「—Well well, so there is also a knight order that really looks unreliable like this.」

「You are—!？」

Almost everyone there was startled by the appearance of the person behind Lisha.

A person with a small stature about the same as Lux.

A distinctive looking eye patch and a black eye with bottomless darkness were peering out from under the hood of the deep blue cloak he was wearing.

The vice captain of the Seven Dragon Paladins—the Blue Tyrant, Singlen Shelbrit suddenly appeared in front of the hangar.

「Wha-! What are you coming here for! Leave!」

Lisha shuddered in fear and took distance from Singlen in panic.

While she was moving, Lux quickly came in between them as though to block

Singlen's path.

「What is your business Sir Singlen? Will you refrain from hindering our operation?」

「Ha-ha-ha. You are talking big there, Chore Prince. Although, I cannot admire this. Right now is a waiting period that all the countries have agreed upon. An action that might stimulate the Ruin is forbidden by the agreement. I don't want to believe it but, you aren't planning to break it, right?」

His voice didn't sound merciless as though to corner Lux, but a voice that sounded joking.

However, Lux knew that he couldn't let his guard down against this man exactly when he was like that.

「.....We caught a report that the division commanders of Dragon Marauder who we were pursuing entered the territory of the New Kingdom. Of course we still haven't caught sight of them in Cross Field, but this is them. There must be a large possibility of them getting into contact with the remaining Ruins.」

「——」

When Lux was showing a dubious expression, Prime Minister Nulph who came from behind whispered into his ear.

「At present, the New Kingdom hasn't heard anything about that kind of activity of Dragon Marauder. Most likely this is just a made-up story of Sir Singlen, but we also have no proof to deny it.」

Hearing his bitter tone, Lux easily guessed the circumstance.

The government was unable to stop the forcefulness of this man who suddenly appeared.

That time with Balzeride in the past was also troublesome but, for this man to be here would be extremely bad in regards to the top secret mission that was commanded to Lux and Lisha.

If they didn't make some kind of excuse to distance this man, not only would they fail their mission, he might see through the existence of the Grand Force and obtain proof that the New Kingdom was trying to hide it instead.

If that happened, the New Kingdom would bear the risk of getting designated as a traitor by the Lords, and in the worst case—the New Kingdom might become the attack target of every country.

In other words, they must not let Singlen accompany them no matter what.

「There is no need for you to be bothered with this. We will be enough for this mission!」

It seemed that Lisha also had reached the same conclusion as Lux and she raised her voice like that.

But, Singlen made a smile that was filled with implication and cut down that excuse.

「I have talked with the upper brass of the New Kingdom. You all have no authority to refuse me from coming along in this.」

「Don't make me repeat myself! I'm telling you we don't need you coming along!」

Lisha tried to refuse bluntly once more.

Lux took a breath to continue after Lisha, but Prime Minister Nulph shook his head.

「You are misunderstanding your highness Lizsharte. Sir Singlen has volunteered to defend the first fortress in front of the Ruin.」

「Fortress's defense.....?」

Airi was surprised while muttering once more to comprehend the words.

「In other words, to prepare for the off chance when the Abyss surge out from the Ruin, Sir Singlen will prepare a defense in that fortress to block the enemy's advance to Cross Field, is that it?」

Singlen calmly nodded at Sharis's question.

And then he showed a wide mocking grin that looked like a crescent moon shaped maw.

「The Drag-Knights of my White Ridge knight order are already taking position in the first fortress near the Ruin. Of course I also have no intention of moving

from there. That's why I had no intention of accompanying your group or anything but—kukukuku, I was awfully hated here huh.]

「.....-！」

Lisha groaned without hiding her anger.

Perhaps from the start he had guessed what Lux and the others would do in the Ruin and he provoked them misleadingly like that.

In any case, the distance from Garden to the first fortress was only a few short km.

Considering that it was a distance that could be closed in ten minutes when necessary, they couldn't let their guard down.

「And so, I will head to the fortress first. I'll pray that you fight to the best of your ability, Chore Prince.」

「.....」

Singlen only said that and got on the shoulder of his subordinate's Wyvern. Then they flew away and left.

Only a conflicted and bitter atmosphere was left behind in the area.

「That man is like usual, a genius of harassment.」

Lisha grumbled right after Singlen left without even trying to hide her dissatisfaction.

But, Lux was asking the details from Prime Minister Nulph with a nervous look even now.

「Forgive me. Sir Singlen proposed his cooperation with the matter this time was early in the morning today. We opposed him, but we were also unable to bluntly reject him.」

There were only three Ruins remaining.

If the New Kingdom approached a remaining Ruin regardless of the waiting period where conquering the Ruins was forbidden, it wasn't strange for the New Kingdom to get suspected of trying to get a head start.

But, rather than something like that, there was something else Lux feared

more.

(Don't tell me, he suspected?)

A big backpack was attached on the back of his Wyvern.

The treasure box that was holding the aforementioned Grand Force was put inside it.

「Lux, what should we do? About the extermination this time—」

Lux hesitated seeing the anxious Lisha.

After worrying for a few seconds, he made his decision.

「Sorry Yoruka. Can I ask you to do me a favor this time?」

「Eh.....?」

Without reacting to Airi who was tilting her head, Yoruka nodded.

「It's no problem Aruji-sama. It will be fine if I secretly monitor them to confirm that no one will be coming from behind right?」

「I see, so it's something like that.」

Sharis lightly hit her palm after a bit of pause.

「If it's Yato no Kami's radar, their movement can be detected even from afar eh.」

「Yes. I will be responsible for the detection role in Lux-san's group, so please rest assured.」

Yoruka immediately saw through Lux's thinking and responded like that. Then next the Triad understood Lux's intention and responded after her.

Yoruka would serve as the rear guard while monitoring whether Singlen would make any suspicious movement at the fortress in the back. Like that Lux's group would be able to concentrate on the swarm of the Abyss in the front.

「Then, let's go! Everyone, are you prepared!?」

「Yes!」

Following Lisha's order, Lux and the others took off with their respective

Drag-Rides.

They were feeling tense with the departure after so long while heading to Garden.

「Lux, how is your body's condition? It's okay if you don't force yourself like that airhead girl you know?」

Beside him, Lisha called out to him while flying at low altitude.

Her anxiety just now had vanished and it could be seen that she was full of confidence and spirit like usual.

「I'm fine. Also, as I thought, Lisha-sama is really energetic.」

「Fuh, well yeah.」

Lisha kept gripping the control stick of Tiamat and responded with a self-assured smile.

「The Abyss extermination or the top secret mission don't matter, because it's a sortie together with you after so long. Besides—in our talk before this, Haha-ue praised me. My decision of making Lux my personal knight isn't mistaken, she said.」

「Her majesty Raffi was.....?」

Those words made Lux felt slightly saved too.

Raffi rose to the throne as queen with the death of Count Atismata, but she must also put a lot of trust in Lux.

The peace that was finally obtained after the Old Empire was destroyed.

This time for sure he had to answer that expectation and responsibility as a Seven Dragon Paladin.

「Saaay, we are also here though?」

Tillfur who was wearing her Wyrm that was skating on the ground raised her voice with a tone and smile that looked jealous.

Then Sharis who was also flying slightly behind also continued after her.

「My goodness, approaching Lux-kun even at this kind of time, it seems that

the princess has piled up a lot of resentment from getting overwhelmed by the other girls.]

「Wha-.....!? Yo, you are wrong, that's not it!? I'm just, speaking the facts—」

「Yes. But I judged that Lisha-sama is still weak against pressure. Like this she won't be able to stand a chance against the others.」

Seeing the flustered Lisha, Noct also retorted with a bland tone while leaping above ground.

「Yo, you guys are noisy! Don't act worried as you please about me! E, even like this I at least planned to invite Lux at the end of the year!」

「Lisha-sama, please concentrate on the mission. You are the captain here.」

Airi who was sighing while being carried by Noct. Lisha couldn't say anything back 「Mugugu.....」 and she went ahead with a bright red face.

Because Yoruka was using camouflage while following them from far behind, she was unable to participate in the talk.

(This atmosphere is relaxing somehow.)

Because at Heiburg Lux was forced to be tense the whole time, this kind of usual conversation of the girls relaxed him.

But, the mission Lux and Lisha were carrying out wasn't easy.

He took a deep breath and fired himself up again. Then the expected scenery was approaching.

「So that's, Garden right now.」

Airi's voice that was tinged with graveness made everyone hold their breath.

Lux hadn't approached the Ruin since it was revitalized, but certainly its presence was different from before.

They could see the Abyss that they had exterminated before. Two Golems, and then seven or eight Chimeras and Haiits.

If it was before, the burden would be slightly harsh to face the enemy with only five Syvalles members.

The best plan would be to cooperate with Yoruka too at the back and lure the Abyss one by one to defeat them.

「Looks dangerous—but, it's not for me to decide whether to spend time with a safe plan or not here.」

But, Lisha wasn't even perturbed by the powerful lineup of the Abyss side and called out to everyone.

「Can you do this Triad? This is a chance to show off your cool side to Lux!」

「Eeeh!?」

Lux was bewildered at what Lisha said. Right after he made that reaction, the Triad readied their weapons.

Noct handed Airi who was on her shoulder to Lux.

「Roger. We will start the battle now. Lux-kun, take Airi-chan away and continue staying on guard at the back.」

The leader Sharis asserted that. Almost at the same time, the Triad started to move.

The swarm of the Abyss that noticed them approaching the Garden reacted and quickly started attacking.

The Triad held back the enemy movement with a barrage of Breath Gun, broke their balance with Howling Roar, and used their weapons to destroy them.

It was the very picture of a basic tactic, but the three displayed a superb combination and steadily weakened the enemy.

The enemy was also a group of powerful Abyss, but the Triad weren't outdone at all.

「We are going too. Don't get left behind! Seven Heads!」

A very thick beam was fired from the special armament of Tiamat, shooting through the core of a Golem, destroying it.

At the same time Legions sprang at the flying around Gargoyles and Chimeras, while Suppressor was stopping the enemies' movements. The Triad would then

attack those enemies with their Cannons.

However, even with that much advantage that they had amassed, the Ruin and the Abyss were formidable enemies as expected.

「Please be careful Noct! Reinforcements!」

「—!?」

Noct's Drake reacted to Airi's voice and it was blown backward from receiving an impact.

At the same time Lisha and Lux, then Sharis and Tillfur were also attacked by an unseen attack.

「This is—an invisible Abyss?」

Noct confirmed the radar of her Drake and muttered with a dubious face.

The battle front was going up from them gradually suppressing the swarm of the Abyss, but then countless Abyss were summoned from behind.

In other words, a large Abyss encirclement was imposed at the exterior of Garden around Lux and the others.

「Phantom huh..... this is also a new type of Abyss that was reported only recently.」

Originally the concept of coordination didn't exist among the Abyss, but it seemed this was an Abyss that was specialized in ambushing.

「More than ten Phantoms are surrounding us from behind. It doesn't look like there is other reinforcements.」

The battle potential of the Phantom didn't seem to be much, but the pincer attack was more disadvantageous than expected.

「But it's simple to overcome. After all it will be fine once we break through this encirclement.」

When Sharis was saying that with a self-assured smile, Lux raised his hand without hesitation.

「I will go, to lure away the enemy.」

Compared to the mission to lure a hundred Abyss that he carried out behind the scenes of the All-Dragon Battle previously, this would be remarkably easier.

Thinking so Lux tried to take the dangerous role, but Sharis and the others smiled.

「Nn, but right now isn't the encirclement at Garden's side thin? It might be better for Lux-chi and Lisha-sama to breakthrough over there ahead y'know?」

「Yes. It will be strenuous to defeat the whole swarm of weak Abyss that are hard to see. Besides I believe there is also no time.」

「—I guess, what you guys said are true.」

Lisha also nodded after hesitating about the Triad's suggestion.

Lux had heard that while he was away, the Triad were working diligently at several Abyss exterminations, but it appeared that all the Triad had also grown considerably.

Different from before, they were calmly grasping the situation without getting agitated even when the Abyss suddenly appeared.

What they showed at Triport wasn't merely battle strength against the Abyss.

「Then, I'll break through the opposite side—」

Lux immediately turned around. At that moment, Tillfur charged towards the remaining Abyss swarm.

「Roger! Just leave it to me if it's charging aheaaaad!」

She lifted up her Hammer and rushed the remaining Haiit swarm on the ground.

「Watch out Tillfur! You are surrounded by the enemy!」

Seeing Tillfur's movement, three Haiit descended on her simultaneously.

No matter how much she had improved, she wouldn't be able to take them on simply with the limit of her Drag-Ride's spec.

When Lux made that judgment, a voice came to him from Airi.

「Please leave it to her Nii-san. These girls understand the battle situation

better compared to the currently worn out Nii-san.]

「Eh—?」

The moment Lux paused midair, Sharis and Noct also rushed to the middle of the enemy formation.

Several Chimeras and Haiit stood in their way, at that moment, the three's Drag-Rides burst with a flash.

「—Break Purge-!」

They purged their own armor, while shooting it out like buckshot at the same time. It was a skill that combined offense and defense.

At the same time the three pulled out one more Sword Device and finished summoning their Drag-Ride.

「This is, don't tell me—」

Light particles converged and took shape into new dragons.

The girls' bodies were wrapped with three kinds of Drag-Rides in the blink of an eye. Those armors were a size larger than general purpose Drag-Rides and also thicker.

Sharis, Tillfur, and Noct were each clad with EX Wyvern, EX Wurm, and EX Drake respectively.

The strengthened type general purpose Drag-Rides that originally could only be used by EX Class Drag-Knights.

It wasn't equipped with a Divine Raiment, but the spec of the Drag-Ride itself wasn't inferior. The girls skillfully controlled it and attacked.

They broke through the formation of the Abyss that faltered due to the shockwave of Break Purge and opened a path to the Garden.

「Everyone, amazing.....」

Lux spontaneously spoke in astonishment witnessing the girls fighting against a lot of Abyss without backing down.

Then, Lisha who was hovering beside him folded her arms proudly and puffed up her chest.

「Fuh, the time they can handle it is still short though. That's why they are also still using normal Sword Devices. Also, I applied special tuning to each Drag-Ride to lighten the burden on those three until the limit.」

After telling that full of confidence, Lisha smiled at Lux looking self-assured.

「It's not just you who is getting stronger. After all, while you were going away from this country several times, we were also training those three by turns.」

「.....」

Right after the battle in the Vanheim Principality, Sharis and the others, the Triad wanted to become stronger.

But, it was also difficult to actually realize that in this short time.

Most likely Lisha's strength that supported them in the aspect of Drag-Rides also played a large role.

The girls were also growing stronger so as to not push all the responsibility of fighting to Lux alone.

When Lux felt moved from knowing that and he almost forgot himself, a voice came from Sharis.

「Now Lux-kun! Princess! The encirclement is broken! Leave this place to us and finish your objective!」

「But, it's still dangerous! The enemies are too many, and the invisible Abyss Phantom is also—」

He wasn't doubting their strength, but the Abyss couldn't be underestimated even then.

When Lux looked flustered and hesitating, a voice suddenly came from behind.

「There is no need to worry, Aruji-sama. Those unseen Abyss are already dealt with.」

「Wwha-!？」

Hearing that, Lisha beside him opened her mouth in surprise.

Yoruka who was standing by far behind until now seemed to have cleaned up

the more than ten Phantoms that were discovered before anyone realized it.

Certainly if it was the special equipment type Yato no Kami, it would be able to overcome the invisible Abyss easily using its radar, but as expected, she was just too overwhelming even then.

「Holy cow. Our great effort paled in comparison like this.」

After Sharis muttered jokingly, Tillfur also looked at that with a bitter face.

「We, well it doesn't matter. Our secret weapon isn't just this anyway! Next time we will shock Lux-chi for sure!」

「No. Tillfur, that's not the point. More importantly Lux-san, it's unnecessary to worry about us.」

「Right. Thank you everyone. I will express my gratitude properly when we get back.」

Lux showed a relieved smile due to Yoruka's support, then he along with Lisha headed for the surface of Garden while carrying Airi.

「Yoruka too be careful.」

「I understand. I won't let that Blue Tyrant come near Aruji-sama.」

「That's not it, don't do anything reckless. Then, later.」

Lux smiled with a troubled look and parted from Yoruka.

「It's coming Lux. The Garden's transfer will start soon!」

「Yes! Lisha-sama!」

The moment Lux tensed his expression and replied, the Garden's opening and shutting took place.

Opening and shutting—the Garden would emit a light that transferred the surrounding living organisms and inorganic matter inside it after a fixed period of time. Lux and the others put themselves inside it.

「Everyone—stay safe.」

Leaving behind that sentence, Lux, together with Lisha and Airi vanished into Garden.

The Triad who splendidly accomplished the duty of opening the path exchanged glances in satisfaction.

「Haa, they're gone. As I thought, doesn't seem there is a chance huuu.....」

Tillfur who was wearing an EX Wyrm dropped her shoulders slightly and grumbled.

「You look really lonely but, it's not like I don't understand your feelings. After all, it has been quite a while since we fought together with him. It's regrettable to miss the chance of getting along with him here.」

「.....Or rather, recently the level is getting too high in various things isn't it? Not just in strength, but on the whole.」

「Yes. But, even we should have things we can do. Even if we cannot catch up with the girls who use Divine Drag-Rides, but as comrades we can still be of use.」

Noct concluded calmly and Sharis also nodded.

「—You're right. Then, if this goes well, how about we try giving him presents at the Holy Night Festival too?」

The end of the year event.

It was about the custom of handing a present to a male that had been of help throughout the year.

A romantic nuance was also mixed in part of it, but even the Triad was also thinking of that.

「Wai-!? Sharis you, even though you always said that you aren't interested-」

「Hahahaha, it's just as friends, that's all. Well, if there is a chance then even I—I cannot say that I don't have such thinking at all though.」

Sharis laughed somewhat bashfully as though to cover it up. Seeing her like that, Noct also retorted.

「Yes. If it's just giving a present, then it's everyone's freedom. I will also do my best.」

『I believe that having a lot of mistresses and heirs is a good thing.』

Seeing the three exchanging comments about Lux, Yoruka sent her voice through the Dragon Voice which caused the three to return to their senses and sighed.

「Aagain, Yoruka-chi is always like that.」

「Yes. There is this thing called mood for everything.」

「In any case, enough talking here. Let's finish our job. In order to catch up to the girls who fought for the sake of the New Kingdom and him until now too.」

Sharis concluded the talk with a dignified voice, at the same time the remaining several Abyss were approaching.

The three nodded at each other and resumed the battle.

Episode 4 – Crossroads

Part 1

A few days before Lux and the others headed towards Garden.

「This place—just what.」

Some distance away from the showy and bustling castle town, there was a dark grey town that had lost its color.

The abandoned capital that was a cultural heritage site within the Marcafal Kingdom—and at the same time an area that was designated as forbidden to enter, Gelsera.

Celis, who accompanied the captain of the Seven Dragon Paladins, Magialca, as her aide spontaneously forgot to breathe after seeing that magnificent view.

The tall townscape that had elaborate carvings and designs applied to it looked completely dull with its dark grey color. It was filled with the atmosphere as though time had stopped.

「Amazing view isn't it? The ups and downs of life, the microcosm of the world that humans live in is only noted within this single land as history.」

「.....」

What Celis learned until now about world history was in the end nothing more than a part of the destroyed city that was left behind as only an anecdote.

And yet, she could sense some kind of bizarre atmosphere from the sight spreading before her eyes.

「There is some kind of presence. A presence of something that isn't

human—traces of the Abyss is it?」

「Hou? As expected from a member of the prestigious Four Great Nobles who are praised as the New Kingdom's strongest. Even though we are still at a distance where even the Drake's radar cannot reach, you have a keen eye there.」

Magialca made an obscene fearless smile and commended her.

But, Celis of course didn't let her guard down.

Far from that, she even harbored wariness towards Magialca and she backed away while her hand touched the handle of her sword.

「Since when have the Abyss lived here? Do the other countries know about this?」

When Celis asked that with a voice that was laced with tension, Magialca grinned cynically and looked up at Celis.

「I want to ask you instead, don't you think it's unnatural? Marcafal is facing the sea and its territory is also vast, its natural resources are abundant and it's also a neutral country. But, although the Abyss appear here, it's not a place where a Ruin's treasure can be obtained, no one has any interest in this country. In these more than ten years after the seven Ruins had been confirmed, there was no foreigner who visited here because they liked the place.」

「.....」

When Celis fell silent, Magialca looked down on the abandoned capital from a slightly elevated cliff.

Her cloak was flapping from cold gust while she brushed up her front hair.

When Celis asked, she was told that there was an oral tradition that spoke of this place as a holy land that one mustn't get near since the ancient times.

If someone carelessly laid their hands on it, demise would come along with calamity just like this abandoned capital.

In fact that tradition had been kept for several hundred years, but since Ruins were discovered in various places, a lot of outsiders from other countries came

here.

「Abyss came out from here, but not even a single treasure or Drag-Ride can be found. And yet, although the Abyss here are few in number, but they are mighty without equal. Of course without cooperation from the other countries, this country won't even be able to defend against the disaster to the surroundings that rarely happens, but no country exists that would poke their nose into such a troublesome thing. There, this country called out to me.」

Fortunately, the Marcafal Kingdom was rich in natural resources.

Magialca who was buying up a lot of Drag-Rides at that time negotiated with the Marcafal Kingdom that was scared of this abandoned capital and intruders, and she was granted with an extraordinary position.

Magialca hired Drag-Knights from many countries and she defended this country, while she was also mainly cooperating for the betterment of the public order of Marcafal, where a Ruin didn't exist.

In exchange she was allowed to mediate for every kind of matter in regards to commerce. She piled up enormous wealth and achieved a sweeping conquest of the market.

「However, why are you telling me such story? Don't tell me, the danger in this abandoned capital is also increasing in accordance with the revitalization of the Ruins in the recent years—.....-!？」

Celis who was talking until that point felt a chilling shudder running through her spine.

「Ku-ku-ku. There are also bunches who said that I didn't do much work despite being the captain of the Seven Dragon Paladins. The fact is exactly as you see. What kind of place this location is, even that arms dealer Hayes had also showed her face at this abandoned capital for a time.」

「Then could it be, this abandoned capital is actually—」

「Yeah, the place where all ancient technology and legacy are sleeping, Avalon. There is no doubt that this is the entrance to go there. On the surface I pretended to concede my authority to that snob—Singlen, while I'm advancing my investigation of this area. When those Lords bunch also pretended to not

know anything, they cannot complain of anything about me coming and going to this place as I please. Underground that decayed castle standing tall at the distance, is most likely where everything exists.]

「Such thing, is.....」

Beside Celis who was muttering dumbfounded, Magialca shrugged her shoulders further.

「Those so called Lords, they are staying quiet even while they know about this matter. It's necessary to prepare without delay so they won't get a head start on us. And the so called true enemy of us too, they got impatient and finally allowed me to grab them by their tail.」

「.....!? Just now, what did you say?」

Celis was unable to grasp the meaning right away and asked back.

Magialca continued with an indifferent tone.

「What those Lords bunch mentioned, about finding the so called traitor. Dragon Marauder that broke off from Heiburg, who was contracting and moving them? Why the Moon left from the sky of the Turkimes Confederation? How did that Dragon Marauder bunch obtained the Ruin's treasures like Elixir—」

『—Leave, you foolish people.』

• WIIIIIIII-!*

Right after Magialca was going to tell the truth, a discordant sound that felt like it was scratching and tearing inside the brain could be heard. Several Abysses flew out towards them.

Two headed giant dog, Orthros.

A powerful specimen that was treated as a gatekeeper at Ark appeared.

「—Hah! So they won't let us get away easily huh. And so miss aide, we will be doing a bit of work now. This battle concerning the Ruins will be intensifying from here on.」

Magialca laughed obstinately while finally pulling out the Sword Device on her

waist.

She quickly pushed the trigger on the handle while muttering the passcode at the same time.

Part 2

Returning back to the present, in the New Kingdom—

Lux, Lisha, and Airi were taken inside the Ruin, Garden. Outside Garden, the Triad and Yoruka were taking care of defense.

At the back side of the giant cube shaped Garden, a single girl was standing.

The girl with glossy black hair was wearing a white mask.

She was holding her breath and concealing her presence while observing the situation.

「.....That man, his pieces are more complete than expected. However, in the end his stamina is worn out due to the consecutive battles. He is not in a state that can oppose us.」

There was no one beside the girl to receive her words.

Till the end she was just talking to herself. She was speaking out the situation to confirm it to herself.

Due to the immensity of what she would do after this, she would need a lot more resolve.

In order to endure the weight, in order to accomplish it, the girl purposefully put it into words.

「If the situation is like this, it will definitely succeed. If by any chance the unlikely event happens, I will take care of it. The time is—」

「Can you not move, the person over there.」

「—！」

Coral Esther warned from behind the masked girl.



Wearing his EX Wyvern, he pointed the muzzle of his Breath Gun on the girl's back.

「Why, are you here?」

The masked girl asked with a muffled voice without turning back.

In response, Coral also kept unmoving and talked to that back with a dispassionate tone.

「Dragon Marauder is a warmonger organization that is composed of three division commanders. They already cut their connection to the King of Vices, but after losing connections to both Hayes and Callesia, they should have another main contractor. I don't know what you all are planning but, there should be the existence of an employer.」

「.....」

The masked girl didn't even stir.

In exchange Coral continued his investigation.

「Even I didn't expect that you would appear. Just, when I came to observe the situation in order to protect Lux-kun, an unexpected fish was baited like this. Is it you who provided Dragon Marauder with the horn flute and Elixir?」

「Liar.」

Suddenly an innocent laugh that was like a child came back from under the mask.

「—Lies lies lies lies, aaaall lies. While you are planning to interrogate me so proudly, you are overlooking the essential thing.」

「—!?」

The masked girl snickered with a bottomlessly bright voice.

「You are keeping watch of that descendant of the traitor. Certainly he is someone the Lords might be paying attention to, but even then what you are doing is too excessive. I don't know if this action is something you are doing arbitrarily or if there is some kind of secret but—either way, from my point of view you cannot be trusted.」

Even while the girl was raising both her hands in a display of non resistance, she spoke threateningly with a calm tone.

「How do you know that!? You—who are you!?」

Coral's voice turned rough. Right after that, the masked girl spoke coldly.

「It's not only you who is laying a trap. Showing one's figure intentionally as bait for the sake of the objective, is also a trap under the name of diversion.」

「.....Coral! Behind you!」

Suddenly Lux's tense voice came from behind.

(Damn it! An ambush!?)

Thinking that, Coral immediately turned around, but behind him there was only wasteland, the horizon, and a very clear blue sky.

「—Born out from flame, the taboo god. Devour hatred and truth and transcend, Vritra.」

Instantly, from behind Coral who turned around, the passcode to summon a Divine Drag-Ride could be heard.

The voice of Lux that came from behind was a fake.

Coral turned around in panic while he tried to pull the trigger of his Breath Gun in order to shoot the masked girl, but his armored arm was stabbed from behind.

「—Wha-!?」

This time Coral didn't force himself and glided to the side to escape.

Why was an attack came from behind even though he was turning around to face the masked girl again?

That question was cleared when he saw the two Drag-Rides before him.

The Divine Drag-Ride with dull yellow color the masked girl was wearing, Vritra.

The Drag-Ride that was standing by its side, was a Drake type Divine Drag-Ride with the trait of steel sharp claws growing from its four legs and two arms,

Asp.

One of the three division commanders of Dragon Marauder, Drakkhen Megistry.

The girl who dressed like a bandit with her leather breastplate and waistcloth was someone who Coral also remembered.

After all he was chasing after Dragon Marauder until now.

「The Divine Raiment of Asp that freely manipulates sound—Hell Choir. Using that to mimic Lux-kun's voice, when I noticed that it was a trap and became flustered, Asp that was hiding with camouflage ability attacked—what an elaborate plan just to kill me with certainty.」

First Drakkhen made Coral to look back where she was hiding, then by making him turn around once more when the masked girl chanted the passcode, his concentration was taken away and his back became defenseless.

But, perhaps Coral suddenly noticed something out of place, he shifted his body just by a hair's breadth and avoided from getting shot in his vital spot.

The unnaturalness of no one being there when he heard Lux's voice made him suspect that there were multiple enemies using Divine Raiment.

「Even sneak attacks will become unnatural instead when it's overdone. As expected, it looks like I'm not suited for fighting.」

The girl in Vritra sighed in disappointment. Then Drakkhen calmly walked forward.

「Just leave this to me as this is my job. You have something to do right?」

「You have a loose tongue. I'll decrease the pay if you say anything unnecessary.」

「That's harsh. Then—the pointless talk is over now!」

Drakkhen flew towards Coral at the same time as her words.

Using the steel claws growing from Asp's both hands, sharp thrusts were unleashed consecutively.

At the same time, strange noises were reverberating once more, right after

that—the masked girl vanished.

「You're planning to summon the Abyss by making the horn flute sound? But, why are you fighting here?」

「Hm? Ku-ku-ku, I'm a mercenary after all. As long as there is money, I won't be picky about the time and place!」

Drakkhen evaded Coral's question and continued to rush forward.

But, even with one of his EX Wyvern's arms destroyed, Coral skillfully handled his Blade and avoided a direct hit.

Seeing Drakkhen's attitude, Coral reached a certain fact instinctually.

(She is able to produce a horn flute's sound using her Divine Raiment Hell Choir and draw in the Abyss toward her. Why then she would intentionally fight outside the Garden?)

Of course, the other division commanders, Vine and Gatouhan surely also had horn flutes, but for Drakkhen who was able to freely handle sound, fighting inside a Ruin should be far more effective for her.

For her to not do that suggested two possibilities.

One, the Abyss that at a glance seemed to have been exterminated already around this Garden were actually hiding.

The other possibility, was that Drakkhen considered it to be more effective for her to be outside rather than inside the Ruin.

That was to say—

「You are quite skilled. Besides you also have a good head on your shoulders. Should I say, as expected from an aide of the Seven Dragon Paladins.」

Drakkhen took a distance for the time being and grinned fearlessly while releasing her stance.

「But—you aren't the type to survive for long on a battlefield. You have too much confidence in your own strength. Try looking up.」

「—!?」

This time, Coral didn't stop looking at Drakkhen so he wouldn't get his

attention diverted. He was only directing his alertness towards above.

The moment his body trembled from getting hit by killing intent from a fiendish Abyss, Drakkhen's Asp fired Daggers consecutively from its claw tips.

「Kuh.....!」

Coral immediately unleashed Howling Roar and strengthened his barrier at the same time.

The trajectories of the countless blades were shifted and he avoided direct hit.

But, the medium size Abyss—Diablos that attacked from the sky couldn't be blocked at all because of that.

(.....Damn it, she got me!)

Coral shut his eyes tightly and resolved himself, it was then,

「—That's not like you eh, for the honor student-sama to get flustered and make a mistake like that.」

A familiar voice came from above along with the sound of slicing wind.

Right after that, the multiple Abyss that were charging at Coral were carved into countless meat chunks and fell onto the ground.

「.....What!?」

This time it was Drakkhen who scowled due to the unexpected situation.

The one who landed down in front of Coral as though to stand in the way was the Divine Drag-Ride with wild thorny armor, Cuelebre, and the Seven Dragon Paladins of the Vanheim Principality, Greifer.

His expression was peevish like usual looking unmotivated, however there was no opening at all in his stance.

「Greifer! Why are you here!?」

「I've got nothing to do now that the Dungeon is already conquered for the moment. I got ordered by our princess-sama to go check the situation here.」

「—Hah! That's an absurd joke. No one's going to decrease the protection of

their own country just for that. It must be that Magialca or Singlen's instigation right? Did they predict that we were going to aim at this Garden after we made our getaway from the pursuers of you, the alliance?」

The aide exchange was a proposal from Listelka of the Lords, but there was no rule that the Seven Dragon Paladins of each country couldn't move away from where they were.

Magialca caused attention to be directed towards Avalon with her movement, while she gathered the remaining battle force near Garden.

When Drakkhen said that with a loathsome face, Greifer jerked his chin.

「Well, there is the duty of confidentiality so I cannot say anything about the details, but thinking with common sense, there are only two Ruins with known locations that haven't been conquered. It's only obvious to guard them right?」

「That's certainly reasonable. But, it's also troubling if you underestimate our strength. I see, the Greedy Wolf Greifer who is famous in Vanheim seems to be quite powerful but, it's overwhelmingly advantageous for me in this situation.」

「Oi Coral, chase after the masked strange fellow just now. I'll deal with this bandit.」

「—Got it! I'll leave it to you!」

Coral nodded obediently and he flew his EX Wyvern towards Garden.

Instantly, several Diablos swarmed around Greifer.

Similar to before, the Abyss were coming down, not from Garden's surroundings but from high in the sky.

「It's unfortunate for you, Seven Dragon Paladin-sama. A battle is not against only what you can see in front of you. Even you won't be able to do anything against this many.」

「So what? You are going to let me off the hook if I beg for my life or something?」

「Unfortunately a stray dog like you have no value as a hostage. I'll finish you quickly—」

Drakkhen was making a threat that was the same like a death sentence, but Greifer wasn't perturbed.

「That's saved me the trouble. I hate troublesome things like pulling my punches. If you ain't planning to capture me alive, then that's just make it easier for me.」

「Stop it with the acting brave. The man who is categorized as the weakest among the Seven Dragon Paladins is—」

Drakkhen sent Greifer a ridiculing gaze while ordering all the Diablos to attack simultaneously at the same time.

All of them were deflected by the light membrane covering Cuelebre and the Tail Blade was quickly swung in a counterattack.

Just with that, several Diablos that were within the range got their head lobbed off and their core destroyed.

In front of Drakkhen who took distance to the back in surprise, Cuelebre glided sharply and slipped into her bosom.

「Photon Dive—is that Cuelebre's Divine Raiment that covered itself with the light of invincibility?」

Once that was activated, any kind of attack couldn't possibly defeat Greifer.

But, the activation time of the invincibility didn't even reach ten seconds, and it was impossible to reactivate right away after the time limit ran out.

In other words, if she made the Abyss to attack continuously at different timings, it would be easy to make the attack pass through.

「How naïve. I have prepared countermeasures for someone at your level since a long time ago.」

In order to fix her balance, Drakkhen called more Abyss using her Hell Choir to imitate a horn flute.

Greifer and the others hadn't discovered it but, other than Garden, there was a liberated facility where Abyss gathered that was hidden.

But, the moment Drakkhen leaped backwards and took distance, she noticed

that her surroundings were covered by heavy fog.

「 Hideout's True Name
Mist Cypher—then I'll give you one more thing to learn. This is the power of the special armament that Cuelebre has. 」

「 Hah! When I wondered what you were going to do, it's just a really cheap trick in the end! 」

Making mist to obstruct the vision.

Certainly it would be troublesome in a normal battle, but Drakkhen's Asp was a special equipment type Drag-Ride.

Similar to general purpose Drag-Ride Drake, her Asp was equipped with a radar function, because of that it was meaningless to seal her field of vision. Thinking that she investigated using her radar, but she didn't detect anything.

「 —Don't tell me!? This is a mist for obstructing electromagnetic waves.....!? 」

It wasn't a mere heavy fog, but a special mist of metallic fragments that jammed even radar.

Right after she noticed that, the Tail Blade with its many joints drew a spiral trajectory and aimed at Drakkhen's neck.

「 Guauh!? 」

Even though the Tail Blade was already hard to dodge even at the best of times due to its flexibility that was like a whip, Drakkhen was late to defend when it struck from inside the thick mist.

She strengthened her barrier and barely avoided a lethal wound, but her body from her shoulder until her chest was shallowly ripped up.

But right after that, the Abyss attacked Greifer inside the thick mist one after another.

During that time Drakkhen withdrew to a safe distance, but the moment the mist cleared up, the Abyss were already annihilated.

「 My invincibility is dispelled, but if you make the Abyss charge into the Mist Cypher, as expected it was easy to defeat them yeah? Did you really prepare countermeasures for me properly? 」

「.....」

Drakken was breathing hard due to her injury while realizing her own naivety.

Greifer preferred to challenge a battle recklessly. Even so, how was he able to survive through every kind of battlefield until now? It wasn't just because of simple coincidence.

Even while he was constantly throwing himself into battle against powerful people and difficult situations, he was avoiding lethal injury while tenaciously surviving and sharpening his senses.

And then, he was healing his injury until the next battle while finding countermeasures.

Therefore he was called with the nickname Greedy Wolf.

「Seems like I misread this guy. In this situation I want to withdraw for the moment but, I also cannot do that yet. Until my comrades obtain it and return—」

「——」

Greifer's face frowned slightly and he turned his gaze towards the closed Garden.

The actions of Lux and his group of entering inside under the pretext of investigation was predicted somewhere along the road.

「You are picking up sound with your Asp's Divine Raiment and grasp the situation inside, is it? But, if you are planning to shake me, then it's meaningless yeah?」

「That's what I thought. A lone wolf doesn't have anything like feelings of fellowship after all.」

Drakken made a fearless smile and took a stance for attacking.

「Exactly as you said but—it's slightly different yeah?」

In response Greifer also readied his Tail Blade and he held his breath and skated forward once more.

「That naïve prince-sama, he ain't as weak as his looks suggest.」

Greifer muttered jokingly and laughed.

Part 3

At the same time—inside Garden.

Inside the small room of the small world that was illuminated by a fake sun, with forest and lake, Lux stepped inside it once more.

The arm of Lux's Wyvern was carrying Airi. Beside him Lisha was flying wearing Tiamat.

If they went straight like this, they would arrive at the altar that he visited together with Krulcifer in the past, but right now he wouldn't be able to enter there even if he wanted to, and there was also no need for that.

After all in the end he only needed to leave behind the treasure box that was keeping the Grand Force in a place where it would be easy to dig out again.

「How about under this rock, Lux?」

「Yes. I also think there won't be any problem there.」

In that place that resembled a real forest, there was a large rock the size of several houses put together, it looked like it would take time to destroy it using the ability of a general purpose Drag-Ride.

「Then here I go. Suppressor!」

Lisha activated Tiamat's Divine Raiment, the gravity manipulation and floated the large rock in midair.

Lux took distance from the rock's spot and opened a large hole on the ground under it using Cannon.

There was no problem until then, but when he dug up the soil using his Drag-Ride's hand, a strange white stone caught his eye and he dug it out.

「What's this—!? Human bone!?!」

Lux was taken aback and he held his breath. Lisha and Airi were also surprised

and peered in.

Human bones, furthermore they looked like they belonged to a child or a girl from the small size.

A gruesome incident could be imagined from the trace of the broken skull.

He unconsciously stared with intense concentration at it, but right after that, a sharp sound of slicing wind caressed his back.

Airi reacted to the sign of a violent attack that was fired from the direction of the forest.

「Is it the Abyss? Then—!」

Without delay, she was going to blow the horn flute she was carrying just in case, but at that instant several Daggers flew out between the forest's trees.

「—Howling Roar!」

When Lux stood up in front of Airi and blocked them, something flew out like a squall from the opposite direction where the Daggers came from, and took away the contents of the treasure box.

The big crystal around the size of a human head, the Grand Force itself was taken away.

「Wha—!?」

The happening that was too sudden caused everyone including Lux to stiffen.

What plundered the Grand Force was a large man with dark brown skin wearing a flying type Divine Drag-Ride.

He didn't say even a single word and flew away to the distance.

「Who is that guy!? Why did he take away the box!? No—」

There was no time to think right now.

They had to reach Avalon in order to stop the Sacred Eclipse—which couldn't be done with the Grand Force stolen when it was necessary to conquer the Ruins. But there was something even worse than that, which was if this fact became known by others.

If the fact that the New Kingdom was hiding a treasure that was related to the Ruins' conquering was reported to the world alliance, they might be falsely accused as a traitor.

「Lux! I'll chase after that guy! You hold back the guy who threw the Daggers just now!」

Even within the situation that drastically changed right away, Lisha made a snap judgment as calm as possible.

The Daggers were thrown from the right side, which was a diversion action from an enemy. From the left side another person with a flying type Drag-Ride ran off with the treasure box.

Because Lux wasn't in his best condition, the time he could use Bahamut was extremely short. He wasn't suited to chase after the fleeing Drag-Ride and fight.

Originally he wouldn't want to fight in this situation and expose Airi to danger, but it was a point of compromise that he only barely could accept.

「Please be careful! The enemy is likely a division commander of Dragon Marauder!」

Lux somehow told Lisha that before she vanished inside the forest chasing after the enemy.

Right after that, the enemy who threw the Dagger before this slowly showed himself.

「Not only did you avoid getting damaged in that instant, you even found out. That's a great discernment.」

「You are—Vine Hachettes?」

「Vine..... One of Dragon Marauder's three division commanders.....the Earth Dragon division commander?」

Airi looked doubtful because the person before them was younger than expected. He was a youth with a slender face.

He looked far removed from the general image of a Drag-Ride mercenary, but his calm attitude made him seem like an experienced powerful person.

He was wearing a land battle type Divine Drag-Ride with deep green color, but there was no information at all about its Divine Raiment or special armament.

With Lux in his current condition, it would be a herculean task to face him while protecting Airi.

When Lux glared at the opponent nervously, Vine's armor suddenly shined radiantly.

Miasma of Petrification
Curse Fader]

「.....-!？」

Violet air was blown out to the surroundings.

Lux immediately leaped back from that spot, but his armor from his wrist downwards that was touched by the violet smoke stiffened, and each joint became unable to move as though they were glued.

It was air of instantaneous binding with adhesive property.

It also caused the energy from the Force Core to become unable to get transmitted to the touched part too.

「—This is!? Is it that Divine Drag-Ride's..... Divine Raiment that binds objects!?」

「Well, you're right. The name of this Divine Drag-Ride is Basilisk, but this ability itself isn't that amazing. The effect will cut off before long if the target isn't bathed in this miasma continuously after all. There is no way I can fight with you in this situation. —Sayonara.」

Right after that, Vine turned on his heels and skated away from the courtyard at full speed.

Why did he let go of the perfect chance to defeat Lux? And then why didn't he chase after Lisha? Those puzzles were solved a few seconds later.

—

—*UUUUUUUN-!*

—

「This is—Ruin's outer wall is rumbling!? Even though we only came inside just

now!」

Airi looked around to the left and right with a surprised expression.

The Garden had a mechanism that would take in objects from outside the vicinity of its outer wall while transferring things from the inside to the outside in reverse every fixed period.

But, Airi that possessed a pocket watch informed him that this was something different.

「Why is the Ruin activating even though the time hasn't passed that much, don't tell me—!？」

The possibility that came to mind, was an existence of a Xfer.

Just like how the Ruin once detected danger towards Krulcifer and took her inside it, there was the possibility that the Ruin could be freely opened and closed by a Xfer's existence and strength of will.

「However, how? Both Krulcifer-san and Mishis-san shouldn't be here.」

Lux tried to move to outside even while feeling anxious like that. It was then, the one other uncomfortable feeling that he felt from some time ago showed its true identity.

「—Don't move, you traitor of the world alliance. Lux Arcadia. I caught you red handed, handing over a Grand Force to Dragon Marauder. I'll have you wait for my lord to decide what to be done with you after this.」

「.....You are, Sir Singlen's—!？」

Airi opened her eyes wide in shock while her voice was trembling in fright.

The aide of the Blackend Kingdom's Seven Dragon Paladin, Zweigbergk Gimle.

An old soldier with a tall and lean figure, wearing a steel mask that was covering his face.

He was wearing an armor called suit armor that accomplished the same function as a pilot suit, along with an unfamiliar Divine Drag-Ride.

「I once heard from Magialca-san, most likely that Divine Drag-Ride is Tarasque..... there is no other information other than that is a land battle

type.]

Lux was listening to Airi's information while pondering in order to grasp the reason why this man suddenly appeared here.

Lux ignored his words of catching them red-handed while making conversation to buy time.

「Why are you here? Shouldn't you be taking post together with Sir Singlen at this time inside the first fortress?」

「That's right. But I happened to catch sight of Dragon Marauder's members and gave chase. There I happened to see what was taking place here. You all handed over a treasure box filled with a Grand Force to them by pretending to have it stolen away. By the way—my subordinate who is a Drake user is recording the image of what happened just now. Acting innocent is just a pointless waste of time.」

「I see, so that's the reason Vine didn't attack me just now and retreated」

Lux was reaching an understanding seeing Zweigbergk talking with him with a bland tone as though threatening him.

In other words, since the beginning, Dragon Marauder and Singlen had each prepared two traps that differed from each other for Lux and the others who entered the Garden.

Dragon Marauder, through an unknown method, had somehow obtained information that Lux and the others would try to hide the Grand Force, and so they prepared in advance here to steal it.

On the other hand, Singlen who knew about the existence of the Grand Force predicted the hidden plan behind this Abyss extermination mission. He must have ordered his aide Zweigbergk to catch Lux and the others in the act of burying the Grand Force.

But, an unexpected situation occurred.

Each side's objective clashed with each other.

Vine, a division commander of Dragon Marauder feared that it would become a battle against Singlen's aide Zweigbergk, he threw away the good chance to

kill Lux and escaped.

That was the sequence of events just now.

「Please don't joke around! We aren't betraying—」

Airi suddenly objected with her voice unusually loud.

「It's pointless even if you feign innocence. We have proof. But, we aren't demons. If you swear an oath to serve under my lord's command, we won't let the matter just now drop and hold back from publishing the image.」

「From the start that is your intention—!」

Airi groaned with a shaking body.

Even so it was impossible to oppose them if they had taken irrefutable proof, that was what she thought but, 「I want to ask one thing, it's a lie that you saw Dragon Marauder and pursued them until here right?」

「.....?」

Zweigbergk kept silent under his mask toward Lux's question.

「In the first place no one can enter this Garden for investigation without making a request to the New Kingdom. Sneaking inside here without permission is a violation of the agreement.」

「Nonsense.」

Zweigbergk coldly cut off that objection.

「Do you think you can cover up your fault with that kind of excuse? It's clear as day whose offense is heavier here.」

「You cannot be so sure of that.」

Till the end Lux firmly declared without shrinking back.

「That time there was no other Drag-Ride other than us around the Garden. In other words, you had sneaked inside the Garden beforehand while waiting for our arrival. And then, you didn't give chase when there was Dragon Marauder member right in front of you—that means」

Conversely the possibility of Singlen faction having connections with Dragon

Marauder instead could be pointed out.

「Kukukuku. Your tongue is slicker than your appearance suggest. But it's pointless. You are nothing more than a puppet dancing above my lord's palm. I have no need to chase after those guys. After all this Garden is already surrounded by our White Ridge knight order.」

「—!?」

The complexion of Lux and Airi who heard that changed.

That was the true reason why Singlen was leading his army to the first fortress that was near the Garden.

By threatening Lux with this case while easily letting Dragon Marauder get away with the Grand Force, there was the possibility that it would be them instead who got accused for having connections with Dragon Marauder.

In order to prevent that counterattack, Singlen had already launched his countermeasure.

(But, what is this—this strong uncomfortable feeling.....!?)

Even if Singlen had spies within the New Kingdom, there was no way he should be able to obtain information this specific.

But, from his talk with him at Babel, Singlen talked as though he knew the fact that the New Kingdom was hiding a Grand Force in their possession.

Then, there was a high possibility that Singlen had noticed their plan since the New Kingdom requested to do an Abyss extermination mission around the Garden a few days ago.

Just with that, Singlen had seen through the plan of Queen Raffi to bury the Grand Force secretly.

That was to say—

Yoruka who was on guard against Singlen, might be vaguely sensing that too.

If Yoruka noticed Singlen's scheme this time, she would—

『Vi, vice captain Zweigbergk! Please respond!』

At that time, a Dragon Voice from Zweigbergk's subordinate contacted his

Tarasque.

The old knight let out a sigh while answering it in front of Lux and Airi.

「What is it? You should be forming formation to intercept the Abyss at the outer perimeter. Why did you enter this Garden?」

『Sir! I approached the Garden in order to avoid getting mixed up within the chaos and got transferred in suddenly—no, more importantly it's an emergency state! The Drag-Knights of our army who were stationed around the first fortress suddenly began to attack each other!』

「What!？」

『I escaped from that conflict in panic and approached the direction of Garden, it was then I got sucked inside here! It had become impossible to form an encirclement. At this rate the strategy will—』

The voice of the male member of the White Ridge knight order that made his report was impatiently cut off there.

Zweigbergk stood still in surprise that their plan had collapsed. In front of him, Lux and Airi who felt the uncommon threat looked at each other's face.

「Attacking each other.....? Nii-san, could that be—」

「Right. Most likely, surely.....」

Lux also nodded without concealing his discomposure towards Airi's muttering.

The possibility that this was the work of the Divine Raiment of Kirihiime Yoruka's Yato no Kami—Spell Code, was extremely high.

Yes—if Singlen kept a watchful eye on the movements of the New Kingdom and he didn't miss this chance— that girl was also the same.

If Kirihiime Yoruka also didn't fail to notice Singlen's movement.....

「This is bad Nii-san! If Yoruka-san noticed this situation.....!」

「—I know. We also have to go outside!」

There was a chance that Yoruka would move to directly crush Singlen who was trying to trap Lux.

But, the two were stopped by a single gaze from Zweigbergk.

「Do you think I will let you go, you brat?」

「Kuh! This is not the time for us to fight like this!」

Lux fired a Howling Roar and started the battle.

Dragon Marauder, Singlen —and then the New Kingdom.

A battle where the motives of three factions were entangled was started.

Part 4

Around that time—at the first fortress near Garden.

Right now inside that stone fortress where the White Ridge knight order that was led by Singlen was stationed, a hellish commotion was happening.

The elites of the knight order started moving in order to encircle the Garden under the pretext of exterminating the Abyss, in order to not let Lux and the others get away. But then they started to attack each other one after another.

「What are you doing! Stop! Don't!」

The majority of the White Ridge knight order consisted of powerful High Class Drag-Knights, but due to the turmoil that occurred suddenly, they were unable to execute the original strategy and they were knocked down into chaos.

「Shit! Is this the work of the rumored Empire's Assassin Blade!? But why!? Even though the Drake's radar has been watching all directions since the start, guaaaah!」

One of the knights yelled that, but his fellow knight order member struck him and he stopped moving.

The veteran soldiers that numbered fifty in total were in complete disarray.

—

「We are under attack by an intruder, Sir Singlen! At this rate the operation to subdue Lux Arcadia cannot be carried out!」

「.....」

Singlen was sitting alone inside a room that was illuminated by tallow lamp—the throne room at the center of the fortress that was used for the commander.

His body deeply leaned on the armrest. In a glance his posture looked

slovenly, while a deep smile was carved on his expression.

「How could this happen!? We should have exercised maximum alertness to the surroundings! For that woman to outwit us is—」

「It seems that our actions were predicted. We fell into that girl's trick. It seems she had come beforehand through an entrance towards the underground passage.」

When a female Drag-Knight wearing glasses who stood beside Singlen acting as his aide yelled, Singlen slowly straightened his posture and answered.

「Just like how we hid troops in ambush inside the Garden in order to trap that Chore Prince, the Empire's Assassin Blade was also aiming at our necks since the start. I don't know whether this is her arbitrary decision or that prince's instigation, but she isn't half bad.」

Singlen grinned ironically while touching the handle of the Sword Device on his waist.

There, a curved blade was hanging.

「Pl, please wait! There is no way we can trouble our lord with something like this! We will immediately send out messengers to the Drakes to find and obliterate the intruder with full force—」

The female aide yelled that with rage and pride filling her voice, but Singlen shook his head slightly.

「Stop it. None among you will be a match against that girl anyway. It will only be a pointless waste of precious pieces—no, instead it will only increase the number of my enemies.」

「.....!？」

The female was taken aback and gulped, then right after that she conveyed her lord's words to all the troops.

A few minutes later, the Drag-Knights of the White Ridge knight order retreated.

「—So you remain here alone.」

Yoruka fully deployed the searching range of her Yato no Kami's radar and searched for her target's position.

There was no more other soldiers wearing Drag-Rides inside the fortress. There was only one life sign inside.

There was no doubt now that it was the sign of the Blue Tyrant—Singlen Shelbrit who Yoruka wished to bring down.

There was no doubt that he noticed her existence who caused this situation, and before she could steal his whole army using Spell Code, he made his subordinates retreat.

「With this—my role is also over.」

Her existence was accepted into the Academy, but she wasn't a formal member of Syvalles.

Even if her life fell in this battle, no harmful effect would reach Lux.

Since a long time ago, Yoruka already had an inkling regarding Singlen's wicked obsession towards Lux, although she didn't know the reason for that.

While she noticed, she felt Singlen's bottomless strength and she didn't carelessly approach him.

She would die if she failed.

While it was just what she desired in a sense, but she didn't go through with it because she had no definite chance of victory.

「This is the same—as that time.」

When she was living as a royal guard in the nation of Koto, Yoruka vaguely noticed the evil designs of the chief vassals towards her little brother, but she turned a blind eye to it and didn't kill them.

There was no way she would repeat the same mistake.

This was the remaining meaning of life for her who wasn't a human.

There was no way she would allow her master Lux to be taken away once more.

「He chose an interesting stage, that Blue Tyrant.」

Yoruka arrived at the fortress's throne room, but Singlen wasn't there.

Judging from the radar, his location was underground— Singlen was inside the Drag-Ride hangar.

The Drag-Ride manipulation by Yato no Kami's Spell Code in the end could only display its effect towards a Drag-Ride that a person was wearing.

In an area where there were a lot of obstacles and other weapons that could be used, Singlen surely thought of it as advantageous for him.

Yoruka kept that in mind while grasping the terrain, then she immediately formed a plan.

Yoruka entered into the underground hangar with maximum vigilance.

Drag-Rides that were in the middle of assembly or repair, new Drag-Rides that had just been excavated from the Ruins, or even Drag-Ride parts.

It was an extensive hall made from stone with the smell of oil and metal drifting in the air.

On that stage where countless Drag-Rides were stored underground, it gave the impression like a catacomb of Drag-Rides.

In this place where sunlight didn't enter, only several torches were illuminating the surroundings silently.

「This is unexpected. I completely estimated that you will aim for a long range battle in a place with no obstacles as a countermeasure against me though?」

Yoruka first let out just her voice and searched for Singlen's reaction.

The enemy was only wearing a general purpose Drag-Ride Drake.

He wasn't wearing his Divine Drag-Ride Leviathan not because of self-confidence, but in order to detect Yoruka's approach using the Drake's radar.

Finally, Yoruka could see Singlen's face that was illuminated by flame, ahead at the spacious central passage.

「If I do that then you will go aiming at my subordinates right? That's why I did the opposite and caught you in a trap like this. If I can turn the tables on you

when you try to assassinate me and capture you, that softhearted hero-sama will have no choice but to obey me.]

「.....」

「You must be thinking that you came here by your own will, but you're wrong. I'm waiting here. For the chance to steal that Chore Prince's 『comrade』, which is his tender spot.」

「You have miscalculated there. I am Aruji-sama's loyal tool—I'm not his 『comrade』 or anything like that.」

Yoruka continued the conversation without hesitation while searching for an opening in Singlen using her devilish eye that was shining purple.

「It's you who have miscalculated, Empire's Assassin Blade. That's the reason why you are defective merchandise. You don't even understand your—」

The moment Singlen was continuing his words, the air suddenly wavered.

Yoruka released the energy that was concentrated in the armored legs of Yato no Kami and assaulted with explosive momentum.

Singlen was standing between walls where Drag-Rides were placed on them. Yoruka aimed towards him, and unleashed a flash of sword draw strike that went towards his neck.

Drake had a lot of functions as a special equipment type, but in exchange its basic specs and output were weak.

The instantaneous attack that overtook sound should be able to tear apart the barrier defense and inflict lethal damage.

But, in front of that attack that looked as though it was taking the enemy by complete surprise, a light wall blocked it without delay.

「—Battle Array – Vicissitude.」

Tuning— using the system of a Drag-Ride, the activation timing and surface direction of the barrier that was originally activated and set automatically could be adjusted personally. It was such a battle technique.

From right to left—or from above to below. By instantaneously forming a

force field that was facing a certain direction just before the impact hit, it became possible to deflect the attack using the barrier itself with this special move.

Yoruka's sword draw that was literally a sure kill attack was parried. She pitched forward and passed beside the enemy, exposing an opening towards Singlen who was turning around behind her—was how it should be, but right after that the wrist of Singlen's armored wrist broke, and the Blade that hand was holding flew to the air.

「.....!？」

Singlen tilted his head in bewilderment, at that moment Yoruka caught a Blade that was twirling in the air.

With that the Blue Tyrant finally grasped the situation.

The first slashing attack was a fake that stopped with Yoruka merely throwing her Blade just before it hit.

The moment that Blade was deflected by Battle Array – Vicissitude, her free left hand used the Dagger it was holding to stab his Drake's armored arm.

Due to her posture she was unable to directly attack Singlen, but by destroying Singlen's method to counterattack beforehand, she made a perfect opening at this timing.

「Trying to probe my hand with that kind of half-baked Drag-Ride is a miscalculation isn't it?」

Yoruka who firmly caught her Blade in midair propped her hand on the handle and pointed the blade, then took a stance of skewering Singlen who was right below.

She aimed to put the weight of Yato no Kami into the Blade and instantly kill the opponent, but Singlen spoke with composure.

「So what? You failure. —Battle Array – Vicissitude.」

Yes.

Because Yoruka let go of her Blade temporarily, there was a lag until she unleashed her next sure kill attack.

Therefore, that attack was avoided once more due to the deflection of Battle Array – Vicissitude that was activated once more—wasn’t what happened.

「.....What?」

Battle Array – Vicissitude—no, the barrier itself wasn’t generated from the Drake.

Looking closer, a purple pattern that looked like letters was covering the armor’s surface.

Spell Code—the Divine Raiment that could control other people’s Drag-Rides after Yato no Kami touched it directly.

This time Yoruka only touched the enemy with her Dagger for a moment, even so a single moment of opening by dispelling the enemy’s barrier could be made from it.

And then, in a battle between masters, that instant became fatal.

(—This is the end. If it’s like this, I can still return to remove Aruji-sama’s enemy. But)

Perhaps because Yoruka felt relieved with the success of her surprise attack, her feelings slackened inside.

That time, she suddenly felt it was a good thing that she would be able to return to Lux’s side.

She also felt that even if she returned, there wouldn’t be anything more that she who wasn’t a human could do for his sake. That feeling shook her.

Just like that time when she couldn’t answer the feelings of her little brother who treated a tool like her as human, she couldn’t even shed a tear for him—

That moment which was even less than a blink was stretched.

Along with the end of that, the Blade impacted with the defenseless Drake. At that time the armor burst into pieces.

「—Battle Array – Royal Domain.」

It was a basic technique that took off the Drag-Ride the user wore, while at the same time firing that armor like a buckshot.

It was a surprise attack that also put a risk on the user themselves, but Singlen's Battle Array applied tuning to it and strengthened it.

「Battle Array – Royal Domain.....it's not a mere Break Purge isn't it? By firing a buckshot to the enemy directly while taking off the armor at the same time, the enemy's balance is broken while the user neutralizes the impact and escapes backwards at the same time. But, why—」

「Your finishing is poor. Your master—that kind Chore Prince is also the same. The world cannot be saved with that. Don't you think so?」

「.....」

If it was the usual Yoruka, she would hide inside the Drag-Ride hangar and ignore Singlen's question, then she would leap at the position of his presence and cut him.

The usual Yoruka should do that without hesitation, but the baffling phenomenon that happened in front of her just now dulled her actions.

The chance that should kill the enemy with certainty was avoided.

She wouldn't be able to defeat Singlen while she was unable to understand the cause of that.

Like that, when she tried to recall her memory of just now, she noticed that at that moment, Singlen was fighting with his hand kept holding his Drake's Sword Device.

「Aah, there is that thing called the order of precedence of command isn't it.」

With that Yoruka comprehended it.

In other words, Singlen overwrote the order of『dispel the barrier』that came from Spell Code, with a powerful order that had strong priority.

Furthermore Singlen held his Sword Device in his own hand, protecting his other control stick from the Spell Code's effect.

Therefore he was able to perform evasive action just barely.

「As expected from a Seven Dragon Paladin. But, the same method won't—」

「—Origin ocean, whirl powerfully to the critical point. Illuminate the heaven

and bring down the judgment of divine will, Leviathan.]

When Yoruka glared forward, dazzling light surged inside the hangar.

A Divine Drag-Ride was summoned at the other side of the wall where Drag-Rides were placed.

The large frame that was covered with armor of hardy blue scales came from a land battle type, but the armor that looked like a tail and dorsal fins which substituted the back wings stretching from its back made it look like a mystical and fierce sea dragon.

「So that's your star performer, the Leviathan. You won't be able to escape like before again you know?」

Yoruka wasn't perturbed at all seeing that majestic appearance and said that with a matter-of-fact tone.

But, Singlen was making a scornful grin that could be seen from the gaps of the wall that had Drag-Rides lined up on it.

「Empire's Assassin Blade. Won't you serve this me? You are quite the useful tool. It's a bit of waste to break you here.」

「That's an absurd joke. Or perhaps, you are simply intending to buy time?」

Yoruka replied like that while closing her distance with Singlen. At the same time she was searching for an opening.

She was measuring the timing for the special move of attacking by taking advantage of the gap of consciousness—Instant Strike.

「All of you should be able to understand—. This world is infested by not good things. The fools who don't deserve salvation are reigning on the top and getting warped. Someone has to make it right. And then your current master cannot do that. No, far from that he is a half-baked person who will only get betrayed and fall to ruin.」

Singlen calmly gazed at Yoruka while talking with a faintly pitying tone.

「That guy has no strength to chase after his own dream. That's why, submit to me. If it's me, I'll be able to use you more correctly. In exchange, I'll at least spare the life of that Chore Prince.」

「.....」

She submitted under the banner of the Old Empire in exchange of them sparing the life of her little brother.

Singlen's invitation was similar with the contract that she once accepted, however Yoruka shook her head.

「That condition is unacceptable. Aruji-sama—isn't someone who will be defeated by the likes of you.」

The moment she finished talking, Yoruka leaped once more and drew near.

Her aim was one of the three hidden techniques of Drag-Ride control—End Action.

She planned to decide the battle in one go by striking down the opponent with infinite consecutive attacks that came from giving command to the Drag-Ride using two types of control operations, but that attack was stopped by a blade of water pillar that surged from the ground.

「This is, Leviathan's Divine Raiment—!?」

Freely controlling water that it touched.

It was an extremely simple property and ability, but because of that it was difficult to beat.

Even Yato no Kami that could obtain overwhelming advantage if it could touch the opponent's frame itself was unable to display its true worth due to the water's obstruction.

「Yeah, it's called ^{Royal Authority}Leaning. Just as you can see, it's a Divine Raiment to control water, but it also has a bit troublesome aspect. In a place that is not a watery area, I first have to gather water to control using the internal mechanism special armament, ^{Water Tank}Ballast.」

It was required for a location like fortress and the like to secure water well due to their nature where a lot of people would stay there for a long period.

Thus even this location that was surrounded with wasteland was a place where water could be easily gathered.

Just as Singlen said, waves of water were starting to whirl around Leviathan.

It was a Divine Raiment that combined defense and offense into one, where those waters themselves could become a shield or spear. It began to show its characteristics.

「The nonsense just now was really buying time wasn't it? Your act was really sneaky.」

「Hoo. You are quite strong headed. Few can live after challenging this me you know?」

Singlen showed a sneer, then right after that he quickly swung his Sword Device.

Immediately after, water blades surged like opening flower petal, the surrounding wall and stone pillars, then the Drag-Rides that were fixed in place were bisected.

With that, the traps that Yoruka laid out were completely destroyed.

Yoruka also similarly saw a chance and laid out her string shaped special armament, the ^{Spider's Thread} *Kumo no Ito* at the surrounding.

Originally it was a barrier of thin size that the human eye couldn't see, but it was completely severed.

「—You are someone with less patience than I thought.」

「Disrespectful fellow. You think that kind of thing will work against me? I'll make you pay the compensation for that.」

- GO-* , the air of the hangar shook once more.

Right after the surrounding obstacles were destroyed, Leviathan skated and attacked toward Yoruka.

In respond Yoruka escaped to the air using the special armament ^{Vacuum Step} *Karafumi* that made it possible to leap midair.

She kicked on unseen air and tried to take position near the ceiling, but before she could—Singlen drew near with terrific speed and unleashed his power.

「—Battle Array – Aeon Fire.」

「.....-!？」

The tip of the great sword that had energy focused into one point on it using tuning sharply fell towards her shoulder.

(Blocking it is—impossible isn't it)

Spell Code could exert its effect even when it only touched through the weapon.

However if she blocked the super strength of Battle Array – Aeon Fire, her Drag-Ride would be bisected along with her Blade and barrier.

Thus, Yoruka made light and wind gushed out from the back of her four armored legs to dodge by jumping aside.

But, right after that, Singlen who got his sure kill attack avoided grinded fearlessly.

「Do you think you can even escape?」

「—!？」

Instantly, three water torrents undulated from around Leviathan and surged with spiraling trajectory.

Without delay Yoruka used her Blade as a shield, but even when she used her barrier she could only stop two, the last attack pierced her barrier and dealt an impact that felt like it was piercing into her body.

「Ku.....u!」

Her breath was caught in her throat and her body's freedom became restricted even if only for a bit.

To take advantage of that opening, Singlen quickly closed the distance.

He used water current as a foothold like surfing, and manifested agile mobility even midair despite the Drag-Ride being a land type battle.

Not just offense and defense, that Divine Raiment was also freely working on the movement aspect.

「Don't make me repeat myself. To save that Chore Prince, there is nothing you can do except offering yourself. Are you planning to make me waste even more time than this?」

Singlen who arrived in front of Yato no Kami quickly held his hand towards its Force Core.

Right after that, countless light windows that manifested for the use of tuning opened, and a dazzling beam of light flickered.

「—Battle Array – Purple Lightning.」

「-.....! What is this!? Yato no Kami's movement is—!」

Although Yoruka immediately try to move for counterattack, the Drag-Ride she wore didn't react.

All the command system was temporarily dispelled, exposing a completely defenseless figure.

(Could it be, he is using tuning to interfere with other Drag-Rides?)

「Interfering with tuning that connected the Sword Device with Drag-Ride, the Drag-Ride's movement will stop for less than a second in order to check that command system.」

Singlen spoke as though to verify the answer and he lifted up his great sword.

「Therefore, if I get close, I will be able to cancel the opponent's command to move their Drag-Ride even if it's just for an instant.」

A large swing from right above was unleashed using that opening. In that instant, Yoruka barely moved her Blade and blocked it.

A single action performed at godspeed from perfectly aligned control operations, Quick Draw.

But, that too was nothing more than a temporary solution.

Yoruka was forced to back away while being unable to see any thread for counterattack.

「What happened to your bluster at the beginning? In any case if you die that Chore Prince will submit to me, so how about you stop with this trivial bluff?」

「What is your objective? Why are you trying that much—to move Aruji-sama for your own convenience like this?」

In response Yoruka barely avoided the water torrent of Leviathan while throwing a question.

The broken wall and stone pillars were washed away by the water torrent. That sight looked exactly like a disaster from heavy floods.

「I'm only doing what your master cannot possibly do. I had a bit of hope on that guy but, it's impossible for him. Even if he can become a hero, he cannot become a king. Against those guys—against those guys he will be helpless. That's all there is to it.」

「Are you saying that if it's you, you will be able to do it?」

Yoruka hid in the shadow of the stone pillars or the stored Drag-Rides. The water torrent undulated after her.

Yoruka escaped into a place that couldn't be entered by Leviathan's huge frame while exchanging attacks, but the number of obstacles she could escape towards was decreasing more and more.

She was finally cornered in front of a huge stone wall.

「—I can. No, this me has to do it no matter what. There is no way I can entrust this world to those unenlightened fools wallowing in the darkest ignorance. Then, at the very least they should be of use as my pieces.」

「In other words, a secret for reaching Avalon is hidden with Aruji-sama, is that it? It seems you are talking while putting on an air of importance but, in short it's something like that correct?」

「.....」

When Yoruka suddenly said that with a smile, Singlen fell silent with a hollow expression.

「You made Aruji-sama install the Grand Force in Babel too, it was a part of that plan correct? It's fine. It doesn't look like I will be able to make you run your mouth anymore—let's stop our talk here.」

「Does your mind get disturbed? There is no more place for you to hide. In this

situation where a lot of water is surrounding you, you are planning to contend against my Leviathan?」

「No—I don't have such intentions in the slightest.」

Yoruka burst into a bright carefree smile and spoke that.

In response Singlen glared at his opponent with a cold gaze.

「I have obtained the information that I wished to ask from you to a certain degree, so I intend to settle this any time now. The terrain also has been arranged just as I wished— With this I am able to use my Divine Raiment to my heart's content.」

「Just when I wondered what you are going to say, it's just nonsense. In front of my Leaning that can attack with water, you are unable to even touch me. You are going to act tough at this point in time?」

「Then allow me to do this—Over Limit – On」

「.....!？」

Right after Yoruka murmured, Spell Code emerged on Yato no Kami's own armor.

It covered the whole frame without stopping. At the same time the dark colored armor groaned and changed shape. Almost at the same time,

An Abyss' howl thundered from outside the first fortress.

Part 5

Around the same time.

Inside Garden, near the wall.

At the vicinity of the entrance where there was a plain that had plants growing luxuriantly and a huge metal wall, a one-on-one duel was unfolding fiercely.

Lux was forced into an unprecedeted hard battle against Singlen's aide Zweigbergk who stood in his way, not allowing Lux to pass to where his lord was.

Because Lux himself was exhausted from using Over Limit previously, he was unable to use his full strength.

Even so it would become worse gradually for him if it became a protracted battle, so he turned into offense even if it was reckless, but Zweigbergk skillfully aimed at Lux and he couldn't narrow in on him.

Zweigbergk purposefully continued the battle in super close range, making Lux unable to memorize his movements on the whole and sealed Lux's foresight.

「Shit-！」

Of course, Lux used his three hidden techniques and Critical Hit to make an opening and attempted to pull away from Zweigbergk like that, but it didn't go well.

(Unbelievable, it's like his movements are completely different from all my opponents until now.) As expected from a veteran knight who was rich in experience, his precision in handling a Drag-Ride as though it was his own arms and legs was outstandingly skillful. Whether it was the way he took distance or his conduct so that his next action couldn't be predicted, Lux felt it with his skin

that he was an opponent that he couldn't let his guard down against for even an instant.

Furthermore, the opponent's attack was completely merciless, as though he didn't mind even if Lux got injured beyond recovery.

On the contrary, because Zweigbergk caught them red-handed about the matter of Grand Force, he couldn't injure his opponent seriously here.

That became a clear difference in strength at a battle of this level.

「—Kuku, it's just as my lord said. It seems that you cannot hold a resolve to kill me even in this situation. Foolish man.」

Zweigbergk seemed to guess the thoughts of such Lux and threw ridiculing words.

「There is no meaning in such resolve! It's unthinkable that a proper path can be opened by cutting down everything inconvenient for oneself!」

Lux yelled and swung his Scale Blade, but it didn't work against Zweigbergk.

Almost at the same time in the next moment, an enormous rumble of the ground and the sound of destruction resounded from the other side of the thick metal wall.

「-.....!? This sound, don't tell me—!」

Lux was taken aback and opened his eyes wide, at the same time Zweigbergk was also stopping his hand in bewilderment.

Fundamentally the interior of Garden should be a special space that was isolated from the outside world.

Accordingly, sound and impact originally shouldn't reach inside from outside.

Yes, as long as nothing drastic happened—

「Sir Zweigbergk. A large-scale battle is happening outside! It might be the work of Dragon Marauder! We shouldn't waste strength here! If we don't get outside while uninjured.....!」

Zweigbergk's countenance changed for a moment hearing Lux's pleading.

But, his expression soon returned calm under the mask and he asserted

coldly.

「You are quite quick witted, Lux Arcadia. To attempt to take advantage of the commotion outside like that, indeed it's just as my lord said, you seem to have the qualifications as a『hero』.」

In other words, he had no intention to differ from Singlen's order by saying that.

「I won't run or hide! More importantly are you alright with this? If something unusual happens that even caused sound to be audible from outside Garden, even the Drake that was recording that image might get done in. If that happens then it's over!」

「.....」

‘A troublesome man as expected.’ Zweigbergk renewed his recognition of Lux once more.

Even this incident that happened at this timing, it made him feel like there was some kind of fate at work.

Exactly because of that a collar had to be put on this man here.

(My lord is fighting for the sake of doing what has to be done.)

In order to realize that, he would complete the order to obtain Lux here.

Zweigbergk hardened his resolve as such and skated his Tarasque.

—But, the ground sunk in at that moment and Zweigbergk was pinned to the ground along with a purple gravity field.

「Wha.....you!？」

「Lisha-sama!」

Lisha who was chasing Dragon Marauder lost sight of the enemy, so she returned. She reported her return to Lux before using Dragon Voice.

But if she immediately moved to assist Lux, Zweigbergk would surely react immediately.

Thus she was hiding her presence until now while looking for a chance, and she finally succeeded in capturing Zweigbergk like this.

Because Lisha didn't use her other special armament and continued to pour her full strength, as expected even Zweigbergk was unable to move from there.

「Now Lux! Attack! I won't be able to pin down this guy for long!」

「No, please stay like that, Lisha-sama. If we are at the entrance of this Garden, we will be transferred outside either way.」

「Don't speak like it's easy, it's hard to maintain this gravity field here!」

Lisha raised her voice in hurry, in response Lux spoke with a wry smile.

「Please. It will be for one more minute so—」

「I, I get it. That's, in exchange, accompany me for a bit when this is over.」

When Lisha averted her eyes shyly, Airi walked out from behind a rock's cover.

「Geez, please don't frolic around even at this kind of time. Just because everyone is traveling abroad and there is a chance to talk with Nii-san—」

「Wha, what are you saying this cheeky little sister! More importantly, it's the happening outside and that ero woman—」

Certainly, right now he was worried about Yoruka.

If she noticed that Singlen laid a trap in order to make Lux into his piece, she might go to aim directly at him.

「Fuh, you all are naïve like usual. You will regret it if you don't finish me off here you know?」

Zweigbergk threatened like that even with the gravity field pouring on him and made him unable to move.

However, Lux couldn't bring himself to fight him at this place anymore.

The Over Limit that he used when fighting Rosa previously as well as the battle against the Ragnarok—Metatron after that overworked his body too much. His limit was near even just from the fight before this.

It wasn't that Lux wasn't using Bahamut, he was unable to use it.

But regardless of that fact, he didn't feel like crushing Zweigbergk here.

Because he didn't try to take Airi hostage when she was defenseless and hiding behind the rock.

This person wasn't a good person, and if it was a military duty then he would surely be merciless.

Even so, limited to this time, it didn't become a reason why Lux must not be merciful.

- Pou-*.....during that time, the internal wall of Garden was shining faintly.

Soon the transfer to outside would begin.

「Nii-san. You understand right? No matter what's going on outside, with Nii-san's condition right now, you already—」

Cannot fight anymore.

Especially if he used Bahamut, the activation time would be extremely short. Not to mention Singlen, even Zweigbergk would be beyond him.

「It's fine Airi, I won't be reckless.」

Airi only turned a doubting gaze in response to Lux's smile that looked like he was acting tough.

(Be safe, everyone—)

That time when he returned back with Yoruka after the date.

He recalled that her face looked vaguely worried.

She said that she was unable to answer everyone's expectations with a seemingly lonely expression.

Previously, she also risked her life and faced the Ragnarok Metatron when it couldn't be harmed.

If she noticed that Singlen laid a trap to screw Lux over, she might challenge him to a fight with the resolve to die too this time.

(Be safe, Yoruka.....)

The moment he wished that, the bodies of Lux and the others were wrapped with a faint light. The sensation of gravity vanished.

After they put their bodies into the space of darkness for a few seconds—the sky opened along with a dazzling sunlight.

「We are out! Can you go, Lux—!?」

Lisha yelled at the same time with their exit outside Garden.

But, the moment she saw the spreading wasteland and blue sky in her vision, she became speechless.

「Just what happened, this—.....!」

Airi murmured from the shoulder of Lux's Wyvern. Lux couldn't reply back.

To say it in few words, it was a manifestation of hell.

In the first place, the surroundings of Garden wasn't a beautiful area because of the periodical appearance of the Abyss.

But, what existed there right now was the greatly gouged and smashed ground, and dozens of the Abyss that covered the sky.

The White Ridge knight order under Singlen's command was wholly put into disadvantage.

「Why? How are we getting surrounded by this many Abyss? There wasn't this many Abyss piled up inside the Garden, and we had investigated the vicinity with radar too!」

Zweigberk raised his voice in a disbelieving tone.

Lisha who heard that from nearby smiled even while sweating.

「It seems, this isn't the time for stupid quarrels, huh. Lux—」

Lisha took a deep breath and turned her gaze to the first fortress that was a slight distance away.

It seemed she guessed something seeing that Yoruka wasn't here.

「You owe me one with this. Later, set aside some time properly for me okay? Come hell or high water, I'll hold out in this place. You go and drag that idiot ero woman back.」

「Please. I will return right away so—」

Even while Lux resolved himself like that, he became worried for Airi and turned his gaze to her.

Then, the Triad who were hiding in the cover of Garden showed up together.

「Yes. Please leave Airi and this place to us.」

「Maaan, it saved us even if it's only Lisha-sama who will stay here! With just us, it was the best we can do to escape while fighting.」

「Both of you, you are safe!?」

It seemed Airi was anxious, because she unusually raised her voice loudly with the appearance of Noct and Tillfur.

Sharis gently caressed her head and then she turned towards Lux once more.

「Leave this place to us. You head to the fortress and go help Yoruka. We will stay safe here somehow. We already sent out a reinforcement request to Cross Field and the New Kingdom.」

「—Yeah, it's impossible to hold out with this many opponents. We will gather those who can move and retreat!」

Lux who heard Lisha's decision quickly pulled out his other Sword Device.

And then, he put strength into his stomach and let out his voice as though to clear away the fatigue coiling around his body.

「—Manifest, the violent dragon who devours the flesh and blood of the gods. Sever the black cloud and sky, Bahamut!」

Light particles converged and formed the huge jet black dragon.

Those parts quickly split and changed into armor that covered Lux's body.

「Nii-san! Please don't be reckless! It's a promise!」

Lux flew his Bahamut with Airi's words behind him.

He mowed down several flying type Abyss in his way while hurrying towards the first fortress where Yoruka was.

「.....?」

Although he was wearing Bahamut, he managed to defeat several of the

Abyss excessively easily.

A very slight strange and uncomfortable feeling caused discomfort in Lux's chest.

But, at this time Lux had no leeway to split his focus to that doubt.

Why had this many Abyss suddenly appeared?

And then, the reason why the White Ridge knight order was pushed back so much like this, was most likely...

There was an unseen something nearby this Garden.

(However, right now isn't the time for that! If I don't go to save Yoruka—!) Lux exhaled while raising his spirit, aiming towards inside the fortress.

In order to not let Yoruka taste the same anguish as before.

In order to convey his own feelings to her, he went at full speed.

Episode 5 – Sacred Eclipse –Gigas–

Part 1

The howl of the Abyss and the rumble of the ground resembled an ominous alarm.

The gigantic fortress shook vertically as though it was going to crumble. The vibration reverberated in the underground's second Drag-Ride hangar.

But, the attention of the two who confronted each other there wasn't diverted at all.

They were simply concentrating their whole attention at the existence of the opponent they ought to defeat who was standing in their way.

「Over Limit? That's strange, how can you use it when it's supposed to be a hidden code?」

More than ten ml ahead of Singlen who was smiling dubiously, Yato no Kami was standing with its shape transformation already finished.

Above the armor with peculiar form that resembled the armor of the nation of Koto, several more blades were sticking out.

Furthermore its distinctive four legs stretched to the back and front, taking shape as though its lower body was a horse.

From the special equipment type that excelled in various functions, it transformed into a shape that was more specialized for battle.

「Yes—that's true. This Over Limit is the true form that is liberated by my Divine Raiment, Spell Code. This is achieved not by going through the normal

procedure.]

Normally, this transformation was executed by exposing and undoing the hidden code to release the limiter.

However, Yoruka used the forced control ability from her own Spell Code to reach until deep into the system and implemented the Over Limit.

Of course, Yoruka had tested this method many times since some time ago, and she also carried out its execution in real battle.

Against an opponent that handled special battle techniques called ^{Battle Array} Senjin and used Leviathan with its Divine Raiment that combined offense and defense into one, even Yoruka and Yato no Kami would be at a disadvantage. (TN: From now on I'll mention Singlen's technique name with Japanese words. Usually other character's skills or Drag-Ride weapons will have English names from the author, but Singlen's technique doesn't have anything like that. So I'll use the Japanese name for them.)

This was a trump card for the sake of surpassing and killing the Blue Tyrant.

「I see, whether it's those useless three hidden techniques or this Over Limit, till the end you are going to imitate that Chore Prince. It's pitiful, both of you whose incompetence only allows you to be used by a man of that degree, and also your future.」

Singlen glared at Yoruka with an arrogant attitude that looked down on other people till the end.

In response, Yoruka didn't seem like she was angered in the slightest. Only her purple eyes shined mysteriously.

「The secret medicine that Dragon Marauder used, Elixir. It seems to bring a supernatural strength temporarily for the user but—in order for the effect to become entrenched, it looks like an operation called Baptism is necessary.」

「Hoo, what about it? Are you mocking yourself because even after obtaining such power, you are still unable to do anything against me until now?」

Singlen's exasperated words was responded to by Yoruka with a fearless smile.

「The most I could do was making the effect to be entrenched into a mere three percent of my whole body, but thanks to that this eye became able to see something really good. Not only can it perceive the wavelength of the opponent's consciousness, I can also understand the subtlety of their heart somehow. That's including how you are actually really cautious about the matter of Aruji-sama—」

Even when Yoruka pointed that out, Singlen's complexion didn't change at all.

He only kept putting on his bold smile and turned an eye that was filled with bottomless darkness towards Yoruka.

「Ha-ha-ha. That's a great joke. Is this okay for you failure? The time you can fight is decreasing even now in that state right?」

「And then one more thing, you aren't a human, are you? You give off the same smell as me. You are harboring some kind of fatal defect, the smell of a broken thing is—」

.....*GO-!*

The moment Yoruka said those words, water torrent was fired from Leviathan at violent speed.

Several streaks of water that were unleashed like gigantic spears were evaded by the four legs of Yato no Kami.

「.....!」

Different from the previous four legs for the sake of moving to many directions, the current armored legs that were in the form suitable for charging passed through the undulating water streams while succeeding in drawing near Singlen.

Yoruka entered into the range, at the same time she raised up her katana shaped Blade and swung it down to Singlen's shoulder.

「Hmph」

But, Singlen scoffed. Right at that moment, a vortex of water stream surrounded Leviathan.

It wasn't mere water, but a pile of mass that was dispatched by a powerful

force field.

If the water was dropped from a high place, it would become hard like a rock. Or if super pressure was applied to it, it would become a water shield that could divide even steel. Singlen defended using that—but,

「—That's naïve.」

「.....!？」

The solid shield of water stream was cut apart and even a part of his barrier was pierced through.

Singlen who had his double layered defense pierced blew away Yoruka using Howling Roar and took some distance.

「So, you achieved the movement akin to the unity of a rider and horse. That's your combat strength from that Over Limit.」

A knight on a horse displayed his strength by managing to put the horse's power and mass behind his own weapon.

Normal Drag-Rides were only moved by the user's control, but Yoruka was fighting with a different usage method.

The back of the four legs unleashed an explosive propulsive force and kicked on the ground, that power was connected from the lower body to the upper body armor which was transmitted into the unleashed slash.

Thus she manifested a destructive power that surpassed the simple strengthening of Over Limit.

「As you know, it will be the end if you are touched directly, so please be careful.」

Yoruka who showed a devilish smile attacked further with her purple eye shining.

She avoided the attacks that Leviathan's Divine Raiment unleashed one after another and her blade finally reached.

「—!？」

- BIKII-!*¹, a line of scratch was carved on Leviathan's thick armor.

Yoruka delivered a surprise attack after making Singlen conscious of Spell Code. Without stopping she twirled around and her next hidden technique burst.

「—End Action.」

The consecutive attacks that were unleashed without even a single breath of gap in between due to the alternate use of mind control operation and body control operation, realizing infinite consecutive attacks.

Singlen put up a double layered guard of water stream and barrier, but Yoruka didn't pay that any mind and forcefully broke the defense from above.

「.....-!？」

After dozens of consecutive slashes, that defensive state was finally broken and multiple slashes struck. Singlen was pushed into a hollow on the wall that looked like a coffin which was there for putting a Drag-Ride in place.

「Haa, haa.....—Howling Roar.」

Even with herself running out of breath after a hundred consecutive attacks from End Action, Yoruka dealt another attack without break.

Countless rubble further fell from above Leviathan that was buried into the smashed wall, burying it.

But, even after dealing that many attacks, it couldn't be said that Singlen was cornered.

That was because Leviathan was always covered by a membrane of water from its Divine Raiment Leaning, preventing lethal damage.

(Then—I have to let out a power that cannot be blocked by that shield of water.)

Like that, Yoruka took distance in order to gather strength for a sure-kill attack. At that moment, her devilish eye that received Baptism read a disquieting wavelength.

「——!？」

A line of death that pierced the left part of Yoruka's body.

She began to leap to the right reflexively, but she didn't make it.

- KINN!*, when the high pitched sound of slicing wind that felt like it was piercing the eardrums could be heard, the attack was already over.

「Wh, at? This is—」

- Pakiri*, with that sound, the armor of Mythrildite was lopped off as though it had been severed by a sharp blade.

The water slash Singlen unleashed accomplished that from a distance of 50 ml at minimum.

True Battle Array Aeon Fire
「Shin Senjin Gouka—Mizuchi.」(TN: Mizuchi = mythical dragon-like beast)

「-.....!?」

Yato no Kami's left armored arm and one front leg were severed, but the rest were safe.

But, that power easily cut apart the barrier that, although it wasn't deployed at maximum strength, but it was in a strengthened state from Over Limit.

Singlen's battle technique that made practical use of tuning—focusing energy into one point, ^{Battle Array – Aeon Fire}「Senjin – Gouka」 was thoroughly a technique of direct attack using a weapon.

But, the attack just now was a blade slash from a pure water stream.

「Shin Senjin.....? Is that a technique that puts even one's own Divine Raiment under the control of tuning?」

Used in conjunction with the Divine Raiment of Leviathan that manipulated water, the energy of a Drag-Ride and the energy of the Divine Raiment were combined to form a slash that was concentrated to a point.

The water blade that was generated from that cut apart a firing range of dozens of ml with overwhelming power.

Because Yoruka was taking quite a far distance, she escaped from a direct hit to her flesh body, but seeing how her barrier and armor were useless, it showed that the power of the attack was something that was impossible to defend

against no matter how much she struggled.

「It's, enough already.....」

The piled up rubble were smashed gravelly and Singlen stood up.

He directed that jet black empty eye with unseen bottom towards Yoruka along with a pitying smile.

「It has been a long time since I faced an opponent with some fight in them. I went along with you thinking that it might be a nice warm up before the battle against that man but—this is no good huh. It's too dangerous to play around with you.」

「.....Looks like I'm being belittled. Even though I too still haven't shown my full strength too.」

「In that case don't be stingy and show it to me right away. Otherwise—you are going to die here.」

Singlen grinned, at the same time rain poured down from the ceiling due to Leaning.

It wasn't a heavy rain that was endowed with force like a bullet, but a normal rain.

(It's not an attack from above? Then why—rain is pouring down?)

When Yoruka was about to ponder about that fact, Leviathan charged forward.

True Battle Array Moon Reflection Web Cut
「Shin Senjin Midzuki— Amikiri」

A water blade was fired at the same time with the slash of Singlen's huge Blade. Yoruka dodged while backing away.

In order to not get hit directly again by Shin Senjin Gouka just now, Yoruka laid a trap and observed for a chance to counterattack in order to not overlook the activation of the technique.

—But, before Yoruka's aim could produce a result, the inside of the underground hangar became even darker.

The number of the remaining torches was decreased because of the water

hitting them.

At the same time, because of the thick fog that was covering the surrounding, the field of vision became overwhelmingly worse.

「You are using too much water. In a situation where sight is not working—Yato no Kami that can use camouflage has the advantage.」

「Is that so? Then try it. That's if you can.」

Yoruka grasped Singlen's position with her radar and slashed at Leviathan's side.

A surprise attack using the darkness and mist.

But, her slash cut through empty air utterly. She slashed once more at her opponent's blind spot.

However the result was the same. She was dodged, or parried with sword. The result was only the armor of Yato no Kami getting even more broken.

(How, can this be? Even though I should have concealed my presence the best I can—)

Why was Singlen, who shouldn't have radar, able to completely predict her movements? When Yoruka came to a standstill because she didn't understand the reason for that, a thrust of water stream shot out towards Yoruka.

「——」

She was sent flying to a wall that was dozen of ml away, but Yoruka didn't stop moving and escaped.

On the other hand Singlen didn't move at the slightest from his position while he was closing his eyes quietly.

「I don't think it's possible but, your so called seriousness is not about using the same trap the second time right?」

「-.....!？」

Singlen drew out his Sword Device and activated his Divine Raiment.

At the same time countless blades of water pillar that rose up from the whole hangar destroyed Yoruka's trump card.

「How, did you know?」

Yoruka stiffened with a dumbfounded expression.

The thick mist cleared up at that moment and Singlen showed his grinning face.

Kumo no Ito—it was a special armament that laid out unseen steel strings in the surroundings, a trap that was laid around in order to be a conductor for Spell Code. All of them were instantly cut apart.

Even though Singlen was inside a dim darkness with thick mist filling the room, he cornered Yoruka accurately.

The rain had been pouring down all the time since before, but the rain itself didn't have any offensive power.

(Then—for what reason is the rain pouring? This rain.....)

This place is an underground Drag-Ride hangar, so it was impossible for it to rain here.

In other words, Leviathan was undoubtedly causing this rain.

When Yoruka wracked her brain regarding that fact, she noticed the true shape of Shin Senjin Midzuki.

「Is it predicting and—grasping the situation from the Drag-Rides mechanical sounds?」

Singlen's Shin Senjin Midzuki that predicted the opponent's next action from the mechanical sounds of the Drag-Ride.

Normally it was performed by using a Wire Tail that was directly touching the opponent's Drag-Ride, but when it was combined with Leviathan's Divine Raiment into Shin Senjin Midzuki, it became a radar that detected the movement and presence in the surroundings from the sound that was reflected by the pouring rain.

Thus this rain spied out Yoruka's location and action, at the same time it also saw through the Kumo no Ito that was secretly laid out.

「Nice prediction. But this is over. In the end—you are unable to even

accomplish your earnest desire as a heartless tool. You chose the wrong hand to wield you.]

Singlen laughed. Right after that, *clatter clatter* Yato no Kami's frame was starting to creak.

She was close to running out of steam due to the energy consumption of Over Limit.

She also couldn't think of an idea to overcome Senjin.

Her prediction before the battle, that she had a thirty percent chance to defeat Singlen if she risked her life was off.

Yoruka herself was called as an inhuman devil, but this man was also a monster.

Even while she was feeling the premonition of defeat, she was thinking of a method to at least take him together with her.

Because, she who wasn't a human could only do something like this.

Because Yoruka herself, who was unable to answer Lux's wish as a human, could only accomplish her mission as a tool like this.

Because she had no heart, no matter how much Lux treated her as a human, she wouldn't be able to meet his expectations, that was why—

However, if it was the way to connect with others as a tool, then even she who wasn't a human was able to understand it.

Useful things had a value to be placed at someone's side.

That was the only relationship with other people that Yoruka could comprehend.

『That Sword Device is something really important for you isn't it?』

『Yes—that's right.』

Yoruka suddenly let slipped a smile at the sensation of the Sword Device that she had grasped when she noticed.

A tool for the sake of accomplishing her objective.

If that was the case—there was no way it would be let go till the very end.

「If you have that much power, then why are you trying to make use of Aruji-sama?」

Yoruka asked with a calm and composed attitude even while listening to the scream of her own body.

In response, Singlen turned a dark eye towards Yoruka with a disinterested look.

「I'm only moving the necessary pieces for my objective. It's something that you who became a tool through your own wish will never understand no matter what.」

「Then, it's unnecessary to feel hesitation to get rid of you. With this I now have no duty to keep you alive for the sake of Aruji-sama.」

「What?」

The moment Singlen showed a dubious face, the remaining three legs of Yato no Kami moved and closed in from the front without any sound.

「—Instant Strike」

Yoruka's attack that read the gap when the consciousness cut off and was launched within the instantaneous timing.

Because it took advantage of the unconsciousness, originally it should be a special move that was impossible to defend, even so she preserved the technique until now in order to not let Singlen prepare countermeasures.

Leviathan's movement should stop for an instant with a slash that struck the shoulder where the Force Core was stored.

She would cut the armor with a returning slash, activated Spell Code, and put the Drag-Ride under her control.

That was the strategy that Yoruka pictured but—when she slashed the wet shoulder armor, a strange out of place sensation traveled through Yoruka's body.

「—!？」

A water membrane was covering his armor.

Leviathan's armor wasn't just wet, a water barrier to disperse impact was constantly laid out on it.

It didn't matter even if she attacked during Singlen's unconsciousness, because the defensive membrane had been put up since the very beginning.

It slightly lessened the force of Yoruka's sword, making it unable to stop Leviathan's movement.

After dealing a focused sure-kill attack, this time it was Yoruka's Yato no Kami that was exposing a fatal opening.

「Leave your master to me. Thanks for all the hard work.」

Singlen swung down his great sword with a grin that was convinced of his victory.

At that moment, the tip of a blade pierced Singlen's left chest.

「Wh, at.....?」

「You are too careless. You are within my range you know?」

Yoruka with her shining purple iris smiled bewitchingly and put more strength.

Right after that, even Yato no Kami that she wore also raised up its Blade overhead, and then it unleashed an attack that made the frame creak.

「—Recoil Burst!」

Right after her words, the super powerful attack struck from zero distance.

The Blade pierced the air, blew away the remaining water wall, and made the Force Core on the shoulder to be exposed along with Leviathan's armor.

「Gu, a.....!」

A hoarse groan was wrung out from Singlen's throat and he was blown away by the impact.

The hangar's wreckage and rubble got dragged by his flight and then he

collided on the wall that was a few dozen ml away.

The white of Singlen's eye was showing with a Sword Device staying stabbed in his chest, and he expired.

「.....Haah! Haah!」

Yoruka was running out of breath, at the same time the Over Limit was dispelled.

The thick mist that was filling the underground hangar and also the pouring rain were vanishing when she noticed.

At the same time a drip of blood was trickling from the corner of Yoruka's lips.

Because of Over Limit, the burden on Yoruka's body was beyond measure. And like that she unleashed Recoil Burst from super close distance.

She received the aftershock from the powerful impact that smashed apart the enemy's Divine Drag-Ride from nearby. Yoruka herself was also wobbling on her feet, but,

「This fight, is settled now.」

She killed Singlen who was laying many traps in order to make use of Lux as a disposable piece.

After removing this obstacle that might be the greatest of them all, it wouldn't be an exaggeration even if it was said that she had fulfilled the contract that she exchanged with the emperor of the Old Empire.

But, it was fortunate that her life was still remaining.

In order to win in this battle that revolved around Avalon, she still had to fight for Lux's sake.

That man called Fugil was the first imperial prince of the Old Empire, but she heard that he actually was a man of unknown identity.

It might also be necessary someday to question even that man who was serving as the general of the Lords.

Because even if the right of inheritance of the past belonged to Fugil, Yoruka had already decided that she would serve only Lux.

「How strange. For someone who is not a human like me, to think of such thing—」

As expected she couldn't hide her exhaustion from showing on her face. Like that she unintentionally slipped out a self-deprecating chuckle.

Before she knew it, she had decided to serve under someone regardless of her own code.

Even though she let herself be employed as royal guard under a contract with her little brother who picked up herself who was unable to have any kind of desire and attachment, right now—

• PAKLi-!*

A sound that was like the snap of dry wood caused Yoruka to return to her senses right away.

When she turned her gaze, Singlen who was blown away until the wall of the hangar was lifting up his body from inside the rubble.

He pulled out the Sword Device of Yato no Kami that stabbed into his heart, then he carelessly tossed it away.

「It's a shame, Assassin Blade. I'll retract my previous statement. You are really something. If I was a human—I would definitely die from that.」

Singlen lifted up the corner of his lips into a smirk and grasped the Sword Device of Leviathan.

At the same time, he summoned a new additional armament. The broken armor pieces were reconstructed along with a force field, forming up an armor that was covering his body once more.

「How!? The destroyed Drag-Ride is—!?」

graph of Counterfeit
「Slyt.....the other special armament of Leviathan. As long as the Sword Device at least still remains, the armor can be regenerated just once. Although after using this, it will become unusable for a while.」

「.....」

Yoruka was breathing hard with heaving shoulders. She was sweating while

merely watching that.

She who had no emotion felt no fear.

But, a hopeless situation was blocking her way.

Something even more terrifying than the resurrection of the Divine Drag-Ride Leviathan.

That was the jet black eye socket behind the taken off eye patch covering Singlen's left eye. Black pattern was covering his left body side from there.

That appearance was the same like the Devil that used Elixir—but, he wasn't using Elixir itself.

In other words, this was Singlen's power from Elixir taking hold into his body through Baptism.

A certain quality was necessary just to make Elixir become entrenched into the body, and the Baptism would torment the target with immense anguish and side effects.

After such procedure that was like a curse was applied to someone, their strength would be raised in exchange of their lifespan.

「How shocking. Forget about being the same like me, you are a monster that far surpassed that—. Your young look and height, those are because of the effects of Baptism which was applied on half your body stopping your growth isn't it?」

「Ku-ku—ku, what a really rude woman. But you did well. In respect to that determination, I'll let you depart from this world painlessly.」

「—！」

Instantly, Yoruka picked up the tossed away Sword Device of Yato no Kami using Kumo no Ito and tried to leap backward.

Right after that, faster than Yoruka who should be jumping back in full speed, Singlen leaped forward with his Blade raised overhead.

True Battle Array God's Migration Road of Evil
Shin Senjin Kamui—Akuro]

Using Leviathan's Divine Raiment, it increased one's own propulsive force

using water stream and doubled the force of the charge.

Its foundation was the release of basic braking mechanisms using tuning.

In order to avoid burden to the user, the range of the frame's mobility and action was reduced by the mobility restriction.

Releasing all those restrictions and putting additional armor on the Drag-Ride was Over Limit, but Singlen here executed a falsely similar act even though the result was a level below Over Limit.

If that was all, then Over Limit was obviously stronger, but,

(This is, he is controlling his own armor like a puppet using water stream to give himself a push, increasing the strength even more.....!)

By combining Shin Senjin and the Divine Raiment Leaning, it produced a water stream that was used to give a boost to Leviathan's movement and doubled its strength.

The impact and after-effect from doing that should put abnormal damage and burden on the user, but because Singlen was strengthened with Baptism, he was able to endure it.

Yoruka barely endured against the offense of Shin Senjin Kamui that possessed sure kill destructive power in each attack.

—But, her armor was mercilessly and emotionlessly destroyed, and she was beaten like a bug whose wings were plucked off.

「Ka, hah.....！」

Her Blade was destroyed, and with it the joints of her right arm snapped.

Water bullets that shot through her barrier broke her ribs. She vomited blood.

Blood was trickling from the left eye that she continued to overwork, making her unable to see.

The fingers that were gripping the control stick were crushed by impact.

The joint of her right ankle was washed away by water stream and twisted to a wrong direction.

Broken armor piece stabbed her side, causing blood to spurt out.

But, she had no leeway to even writhe from the intense pain that burned her nerves.

Strength was leaving her whole body along with her senses. Cold water washed away her blood and her body temperature.

One portion of her limbs broke, blood was flowing from her closed left eye, and her whole body was soaked with blood due to all the cuts. Like that half of Yoruka's body sunk under the water along with Yato no Kami's wreckage, a smile on her lips.

(.....I blundered, completely)

She had no more weapons remaining.

Even so a smile was tugged on her lips.

She barely kept her grip on her Sword Device with three fingers that weren't broken, and she gazed at Singlen with her remaining eye.

「—Farewell strong warrior. Pray that you will be reborn as a human in the next world and die.」

Singlen lifted up his Blade from a distance to perform the last rite for Yoruka.

Yoruka thought while feeling the final moments of her life.

She had done what she could.

This time she could die as tool for sure, fulfilling her earnest desire.

Even though she should be satisfied with just that, she felt a guilty feeling somewhere within herself.

If she died protecting the nation of Koto, what would her little brother who was left behind have thought.

And then, Lux—what would he think.

「Shin Senjin Gouka—Mizuchi.」

A water blade was fired along with Singlen's voice that told of her demise.

- KIN-!*, a high pitched sound that cut through the air.

Just an instant before she could hear that sound, a gust of wind landed down in front of her.

「Guh.....!」

But she only barely understood, that the dull groaning sound leaking out from a mouth didn't come from her.

Lux entered the underground hangar a few seconds before. He found Yoruka who was on the verge of death and his body moved at once.

He instantly understood that she was dying, and also that she was in a state that was impossible to dodge or block Singlen's attack.

If he covered for her using himself as a shield, he might be taken down.

Without even any time to deeply calculate such thing, when he noticed, he was standing in front of her.

—But, he was too optimistic.

The special move of Singlen who had unleashed the power of Baptism, Shin Senjin Gouka—Mizuchi.

The water blade that was fired from the Blade severed through his barrier that was deployed in full power, the shockwave of Howling Roar he fired, and the armor he wore, tearing apart Lux's chest vertically.

His heart stopped from the bleeding and impact.

In other words it was instant death.

「Aruji, sama.....?」

Yoruka called out to Lux's back, but there was no reply.

There wasn't even the sound of breathing coming from him.

「—Insolent man. Messing up the plan of this me like this, so his caliber is only half-baked like this after all.」

Along with an exasperated sigh, Singlen with his body that was wholly turned

black displayed an eye with shining crimson iris.

「His path is closed without being able to become either a hero or a ruler. That means that this is your limit.」

Singlen's murmur wouldn't reach Lux's ear anymore.

That fact struck Yoruka who was left behind alone.

「Why, is this.....?」

The armor of Bahamut was dispelled and Lux collapsed backwards. His body lied above Yoruka who was similarly lying down face up.

Both his eyes were shut quietly, his pulse had stopped completely.

「Why did you risk your life, for the sake of the likes of me? Even though I cannot repay you with anything, even though someone inhuman like me, can only be useful by obtaining battle results—」

She understood that there wouldn't be an answer to her question.

Even so Yoruka continued to form words piece by piece.

「.....Aruji-sama, was completely mistaken.」

Yoruka suddenly let out a smile of resignation. She raised her upper body and leaned her back on a rubble, then she stared at the face of her dead master.

「Even though, you should have just abandoned someone useless like me right away. Even though I cannot, repay your favor with anything—」

The same like that time with her little brother, she was unable to spill even a trickle of tear.

In exchange, the tear of blood that flowed from her abused left eye trickled down her cheek and fell on Lux's chest.

She only embraced the corpse of her master along with a sweet despair enveloping her whole body, and raised a soundless wail.

「——」

Part 2

About the same time—outside, in the vicinity of the first fortress.

Around Garden.

Between the wasteland and the blue sky where a lot of Abyss were spreading out, a fierce fight that no one knew when it would end was unfolding.

「Shit! The number is too many! I'll take care of this place! First we will secure an escape path!」

The commander Lisha raised her voice and gave instruction to the Triad.

The White Ridge knight order that was attracting the Abyss swarm was rallying themselves with the assistance of Zweigbergk, but in the first place they wouldn't be able to retreat if they couldn't break through the encirclement.

It seemed that Greifer and Coral were each facing a Drag-Knight of Dragon Marauder. They had no leeway to assist them.

「SHAAAAAAAHH.....!」

「Don't, GET IN MY WAAAYYYYY—!」

Lisha raised a yell that sounded like a howl and bombarded a Gargoyle.

Even if they secured an escape path, there was no way they could start retreating until Lux returned back with Yoruka.

If they left the two alone smack dab in the middle of an Abyss swarm, it was obvious what would be the result of that in the end.

「Good grief, in battle, everything won't go as expected huh!」

Because the new battle style that Lisha mastered would exhaust her completely in short time, she was unable to use it here.

A battle without Lux, Krulcifer, Celis, Philuffy, and Yoruka, was very difficult.

Lisha once more realized just how much help their existences were.

「But —I cannot lose.」

Even while feeling despair from the Abyss that continued to appear from empty air one after another, she was unable to endure when she thought of the other girls.

She wasn't a princess who could only get protected.

She would also lead everyone in battle, with strength and skill as a Drag-Knight.

Because that was her dignity as the princess who Lux served, her objective.

「When this battle is over safely, I'll tell him properly! That's why, no matter how many powerful enemies there are around me, there is no way I'll get defeated hereeee—!」

She suppressed the enemy movement with Suppressor's gravity field and then sniped them with Seven Heads.

While Lisha was continuously holding back the enemy desperately by repeating that attack many times, the Triad were also fighting behind her.

「Airi, please be careful. I'm searching the enemy with radar, but it will be troublesome if unseen Abyss is targeting us.」

Airi nodded briefly at Noct's words and hid herself behind the cover of a rock.

The intensity of the battle far surpassed the imagination, even so Noct was splitting her focus to protect Airi rather than securing an escape path.

「Good grief—someone persistent is hated you know!？」

「Yeah, exactly. Lacking in consideration and restrain is also the same!」

Tillfur and Sharis each attempted to break through with Hammer and Breath Gun in their respective hands, but things didn't really go well.

In a situation where a large swarm was surrounding from four directions, the energy consumption was too intense even if they fought the Abyss equally.

Airi was watching that deadly battle from behind a rock while feeling the suspense inside her heart.

(The Triad, they are already near their limit in using the strengthened type general purpose Drag-Rides.)

When Noct and the others were training to use the strengthened type general purpose Drag-Rides, it was none other than Airi who was measuring their usage time limit.

Airi knew how, in order to become the strength of Lux—and also the Academy, they acted like usual on the surface, while behind the scenes they were also continuing to work hard desperately.

Airi also knew how currently, those girls were gradually exceeding the limit of their stamina.

Even if they kept at it with willpower, it wouldn't continue for long. Their armor would be dispelled soon.

The Abyss's encirclement could be broken through with a bit more.

But, even though it would be just one more push, they were lacking a bit of firepower.

「Noct! You don't need to worry about me! Please go assist those two!」

「No. I cannot approve of that. I will be breaking my promise with Lux-san if Airi is exposed to danger.」

Noct was replying with a calm voice while battling an Abyss slightly to the front. But,

「We will be annihilated either way if we are unable to escape like this! If I'm only becoming a burden, I have the resolve to die!」

「-.....!？」

Noct who heard that yell showed a slightly pained look.

After worrying for a few moments, Noct took a deep breath and turned the back of her EX Drake towards Airi.

「Please forgive me Airi. I made you speak that much. That's because of our powerlessness.」

「It's the same for me. This is because I was unreasonable and asked to come

along.]

When Airi smiled softly, Noct also slipped out a chuckle.

「Yes. You're right. Let's get scolded together later.]

Noct murmured that while simultaneously using EX Drake's Step. She began giving cover fire using her Cannon.

『Both of you please lure away the enemy! I will fire my remaining fire power.】

「Okkaayy!】

「Take care of it, Noct!】

Tillfur and Sharis who were battling Abyss with close range weapons in hand guessed Noct's intention with just that sentence.

No matter how much training they accumulated, the three's Drag-Ride aptitude value, stamina, and technique wouldn't be a match with the members who could handle Divine Drag-Rides.

Then, in order to win a battle using a strong point that was unique to only the three of them, they strengthened their coordination along with their personal training.

「GISHAAAAH!】

A swarm of flying type hissed while attacking. The two moved in the trajectory with shape of '8' and gathered them in one spot.

The moment around ten Abysses were gathered at their crossing point, Sharis and Tillfur raised their voices simultaneously.

「—Howling Roar!】

The vortex of shockwave that was filled with the power of a strengthened type general purpose Drag-Ride pressured the swarm from left and right and stopped their movement.

Right after that, Noct launched a following attack from her Cannon without even a moment longer.

「GU, GYAAAAH.....!】

The atmosphere was enveloped with flame blast and the Abyss were smashed apart along with the impact.

Even so as expected several Abyss survived the attack.

The remaining Abyss were showered with swings from Hammer and Blade.

「Magnificent, everyone—」

With this an escape path was opened, and it became possible to retreat temporarily with Lisha and the others and reorganize themselves.

After that it would be only Lux and Yoruka who were inside the first fortress that they had to worry about.

The Triad unintentionally relaxed their tension after throwing all their strength. In that moment, Airi felt unease in her body.

「-.....!？」

Her weight vanished and she felt like she was pulled into the air.

That moment when she floated high into the air, Airi was kidnapped by a Drag-Ride that flew with fierce speed from behind.

「—Airi-!？」

With a shocked expression Noct used Step and pursued, but she didn't reach.

「Wait!」

Sharis flew to chase after the unfamiliar saffron colored Drag-Ride, but at that moment her EX Wyvern was hit by an invisible power that threw her to the ground.

「Uah!？」

Sharis turned a somersault with a short scream. Looking down at the three who were left behind, the masked girl left wordlessly.

「Be careful Sharis! It looks like she is using some kind of strange Divine Raiment!」

Tillfur also skated forward in the attempt of pursuit, but the figure of the kidnapper Drag-Knight vanished altogether with Airi.

At the opposite side of Lisha who was fighting hard a hundred ml behind, the three were left behind there while standing dumbfounded.

Part 3

Inside the underground Drag-Ride hangar of the first fortress— The walls, floor, and even the ceiling were completely destroyed.

Just like the remaining torch that was faintly illuminating the darkness, Lux's life was also going out.

His consciousness that sunk into darkness could faintly hear the screams of the girl who was unable to find any words.

The sensation of blood dripping from the girl's left eye.

His body felt the warmth of the skin embracing him.

This was an inevitability that would visit him someday when he continued to risk his life recklessly and dangerously. He was finally brought down.

Rather, his luck was too good that he was safe until now.

(Airi.....sorry. Even though I told you that I won't let you be alone—)

He felt pained for lying to his only little sister, for being unable to stay at the side of Lisha and the others till the end.

However separated from that, he didn't feel the slightest regret for trying to save Yoruka until the very end.

There were many things on his mind, being on the verge of death.

But, right after that something hot permeated into Lux's chest.

And then suddenly the scene that he saw wasn't his memory with the girls, but a bizarre scene.

—

—

X X X X X X

- Zazazaza-*, an image of memory that was covered with static like a sandstorm was flowing into Lux.

It wasn't the phenomenon of recalling the past when dying, it felt like he was shown the memory of someone else.

He could see from overhead view, a strange space that was surrounded by silver walls and surface.

It was inside a facility that vaguely resembled the interior of a Ruin.

At the center of that room that was surrounded by several unknown objects, an unfamiliar girl was standing.

The girl in dress was folding her arms with her back turned on him. She was talking as though speaking to someone.

「Your whole family including you, have a certain instinct imprinted into their genetics. A competitive factor was planted by the predecessor scientist in order for your family to grow into an even more excellent existence. That factor is considered to bring out the aspect of overtaking and betraying other people from your family, and because of that all of you were persecuted. Even everyone of Xfer said that they will only have anything to do with us, the imperial family of the Lords.」

.....

Lux had no memory of this.

There was no girl with a similar face to this girl among the imperial family of the Old Empire.

She was different from the first imperial princess Listelka and the third imperial princess Hayes, but she certainly had distinctive silver hair like the Arcadia family.

Even when Lux tried to throw a question, he was unable to make any words inside the image.

The girl wearing a dress and flower crown quietly continued to talk as though

doing it in Lux's place.

「Even so Fugil, you proved to me that it's a mistake. I will wait for you to wake up from having Baptism applied to your whole body. In order to change this world that is covered with dispute, this time for sure. I will complete the transforming Drag-Ride in this Avalon before you wake up.」

Looking closer, he could see that the girl was talking to a small black box.

Perhaps, that was a machine that was recording the girl's words.

And then.

For some reason the girl turned towards a wall and peered into a cylindrical water tank beside it.

Lux's eyes couldn't see clearly, but inside a slender body of a girl was floating.

「Sacred Eclipse is also near completion. I swear I will build something wonderful without fail before you are awake. In order to grant both our wish, to save someone else—」

The girl next went down a stair towards the underground and opened the door of a room that was locked securely.

Inside, there was the figure of a young man that was entered inside a transparent huge metal box. He was undergoing a surgery by machine with his eyes closed all along.

(That's—Fugil, niisan!?)

When he saw until that point, a question emerged inside Lux.

The question was, from which age did this scene come from?

(Did he come and enter the Ruin secretly since the era of Old Empire?)

No, Lux rethought, there was no way that was true.

Listelka Rei Arshalia who was a survivor from a few hundred years ago said that Sacred Eclipse existed since the past as a calamity that destroyed the world.

『I'll tell you one thing for the end, my foolish little brother. Since the beginning, I am not an imperial prince or anything of this empire.』

On the last day of the coup d'etat, his elder brother who betrayed him and murdered the emperor said that.

If his words were correct, then Fugil's true identity—just what.....

The girl lovingly caressed the metal coffin where Fugil was sleeping, then she slowly turned around.

The moment the face of the girl became clear to Lux after turning around, a terrifying chill ran through him.

(What, the. This girl.....!)

The face of that girl, he had recollection of it even though only faintly.

No, just now, a memory that should be forgotten was resurrected in his mind.

In the past, seven years ago, when Lux went to Ries Island for a rescue there—

This girl, appeared there.

「Uh, gu.....!」

His voice slipped out, even though he couldn't feel his body at all until now, a headache assaulted him.

His memory was muddy.

At that time, Philuffy should have died because she was unable to adapt to the seed of a Ragnarok. The reason she was resurrected—was because of Sacred Eclipse.

That thing appeared before him along with light, and then to Philuffy who had stopped breathing—

Lux recalled a part of his memory and his breathing stopped from feeling taken aback.

Before Lux's eyes, he could see once more the chalk white room that was

surrounded by an inorganic wall.

The girl was standing there. She was peering into the cylindrical water tank while talking somewhat caringly.

「The Sacred Eclipse that you and I created, will be drawn towards the heart of a strong person, and grant salvation for only once. If their feeling is a pure wish, in order to grant it—Sacred Eclipse will grant strength, this Elixir」

When the silver haired girl that he had never even seen before smiled, Lux's consciousness was cut off with a snap from the scene he was watching.

Right after that, intense pain ran through the blackout, and his dim vision suddenly opened.

Part 4

「Aruji, sama.....?」

When he opened his eyes, he could see the worn out Yoruka peering onto Lux's face.

At the side, the silver haired girl that he had just seen inside the dream—no, something humanoid which really resembled that girl was standing there.

It was looking down on Lux while sporting a gentle smile that looked angelic.

The drop that was shining in seven colors spilling from its fingertip was trickling down to the wound on Lux's chest.

「This is, Sacred Eclipse? Is it.....? No, rather than that my—?」

Here Lux finally noticed how he should have died already.

The deep fissure that was carved on his chest had vanished when he became aware of it.

「What happened? This is—」

Yoruka also noticed Sacred Eclipse and murmured with an astonished expression, but Lux didn't understand anything.

At that time, Singlen who was standing arrogantly at some distance away suddenly let out his voice.

「Ha—ha—ha. This is interesting! I see, so it's a jackpot at this first and last time! This minuscule chance of the surface side of Sacred Eclipse performing revival, just like with me at that time!」

Singlen's crimson eye socket shined while his body under the armor suit was dyed black and he yelled.

「.....!？」

Lux and Yoruka became alert against that laughing voice that sounded like he was possessed, but Singlen only pressed on his face and continued to laugh.

「I was misjudging this guy. It was my eyes that were cloudy. What is necessary so one can be called a hero isn't physical strength or even ingenuity. It's the heaven's decree at the critical moment when it counts! You accomplished the last miracle without intending it—or perhaps it's because of that foolish choice of trying to save everyone. In that case even without me using you, you will surely deliver your fang at the throat of that guy!」

Singlen spread his arms towards the sky and laughed loudly without suppressing down his mad excitement.

Right after that, the black pattern of devil transformation receded from his body. He returned to his usual form that was no different from a human.

Lux and Yoruka were taken aback, even so their hands moved towards their Sword Devices, it was then.

—*DOooOOON!*

A howl that sounded like rumbling ground thundered from above, the whole hangar shook fiercely.

「I see—now I have no more need to tame you to kill that guy. It's pointless even if I stay here. I'll lose my remaining pieces if I don't quickly assist them. I've broken that nasty lethal weapon too. I don't have anything to do here anymore.」

「Wait, you're going to run away after going this far?」

Singlen said that and turned around, but Lux called out to his back.

But, Singlen only turned around his head and returned back his usual dark eye glint.

「What did you plan to make me do!? Who do you want to kill!?」

Hearing the question that the agitated Lux spat out, Singlen's mouth warped into an arc.

「There is no time to have that talk here. Until you recover your memory—look forward to it in anticipation. In exchange I'll teach you

something good. That Sacred Eclipse which revived you, it will inverse to 『reverse side』 soon. Defeat it now that you are resurrected.』

「—!？」

Lux was shocked and looked at the Sacred Eclipse, then the shape of the beautiful silver haired girl transformed.

It looked injured as though its whole body was carved, its skin was carbonized as though flame had burned it, and its eyeballs rotted and fell.

And then, its mouth formed a wide grin that was like a crescent moon.

At the same time it unleashed a bottomless malicious killing intent towards mankind.

The last and greatest Ragnarok—the one that would guide the world to destruction was slowly starting to change.

「I'll be waiting, Chore Prince—no, Black Hero. You will understand the meaning of my words someday. Including how this world won't change at all unless I accomplish what I have to do.」

Singlen only said that and rode the wave that Leviathan's Divine Raiment created. He withdrew from the underground Drag-Ride hangar.

Yoruka who was crouching in a dying state and Lux whose wound was healed were left behind.

And then, there was also the Sacred Eclipse that was carrying out an ominous transformation slowly.

Yoruka was watching that with only her blue right eye while her body wasn't stirring at the slightest.

With that, even Lux understood that she already didn't have even a scrap of strength to resist.

「—Why, Aruji-sama came for the likes of me?」

She didn't try to look at Lux.

Yoruka merely muttered with a low voice as though she was talking to herself.

「Why did you secretly try to defeat Singlen? Surely someone at your level

should have understood what would happen to you.]

「.....」

Lux picked up his Sword Device that fell on the ground and silently sent his thought.

Perhaps thanks to the Elixir that was poured on him, not just his wound, even his stamina was recovered.

He summoned Bahamut once more. He might be able to fight against this Sacred Eclipse.

「Perhaps, I'm the same like that. Knowing that Yoruka is braving through danger in order to protect me, I was unable to leave you alone.」

When Lux showed such powerless smile, Yoruka quietly shook her head.

「Aruji-sama—really doesn't have eyes for evaluating people.」

Yoruka formed a resigned smile and objected like that to Lux.

「Putting your hand into fire in order to pick up a tool like me..... there is a limit even in making a stupid plan. Just for the sake of this kind of broken doll, that doesn't have any emotion or anything.」

Yoruka sighed with a serious face seemingly exasperated.

Lux couldn't read her emotion.

Even so—what he should say as her master was decided.

「That's not true. I remembered about the time when Philuffy came back to life. At that time, Sacred Eclipse granted my wish.」

That scene that flowed into him along with Elixir—the actions of that girl who looked the same as Sacred Eclipse, he still didn't understand what was the meaning of that.

However, there was just one thing that he was convinced about.

Just like how his wish once saved Philuffy, Sacred Eclipse also responded to Yoruka's hidden wish and saved Lux.

「Thanks to Yoruka's wish, I was saved. That's why, something like you being a

tool without emotion, isn't true.]

「.....」

Lux's smile looked persuasive.

Even so Yoruka's eyes wouldn't meet Lux.

She kept crouching beside Lux with a fleeting expression while listening to that.

Her broken fingers kept tightly grasping her Sword Device.

「That's right isn't it.」

She replied like that with a voice that was filled with emptiness.

「I am not a faithful tool or anything. I cannot even control a single emotion of mine. I'm just a poor excuse of a human. Just like what my father told me once, I am a failure that is not human.」

Yoruka muttered indifferently without even a self-torturing feeling mixed within her voice.

Even so Lux called to her.

「After the fight against Gigas, I was happy that Yoruka came for me. The Old Empire was destroyed completely without me being able to save anyone, but with that it felt like I was able to save it just for a bit.」

「.....」

Yoruka's face didn't change even after hearing those words.

But, her shoulder shook just slightly.

「Yoruka. I'm not asking you who are a tool to become human. However, I don't want to use and throw away the human you like a disposable tool. Just like how you didn't let go of your katana, I need you, in order for me to keep being myself—」

「I am, Aruji-sama's.....katana?」



Yoruka was half dumbfounded hearing those words. She stared at the Sword Device of Yato no Kami.

In order for her to become her little brother's servant, in order for her to persist in her contract, she didn't let go of this katana until the very end.

Even though she was unable to understand a human's emotions, if it was a feeling about needing something then she could understand it.

In order for Lux to carry out his own belief, he saved Yoruka when she was his opponent, like that—

「Besides, calling yourself a failure isn't right. Humans, all of them are imperfect creatures. Anyone, no matter who, will all make mistakes and hesitate. Even me, Lisha-sama, and also everyone else. That's why—it's fine for you to stay beside me.」

Saying that, Lux held out his hand towards Yoruka.

Yoruka hesitated for a moment, then she put her hand on that hand.

「—As you wish, Aruji-sama.」

The time between the two stopped for a few moments.

He could feel the warmth of Yoruka's blood as though it was showing her feeling for the first time.

- DOoOON!*

But, right after that the underground Drag-Ride hangar shook intensely.

Because of the fierce battle that happened here, the first fortress itself was starting to crumble.

The Sacred Eclipse that was already losing its human shape was also a concern, but first they should escape from here.

「Yoruka! We are getting out!」

Lux summoned Bahamut once more and quickly put it on as armor.

(—I can do this.)

Although the scar on his chest was remaining slightly, he could move

perfectly.

It was slightly baffling why Lux didn't go through devil transformation like other people after getting Elixir poured on him, but there was no time to ponder it.

He carried Yoruka in his arms and escaped while avoiding the avalanche of rubble.

Lisha and the others said that they temporarily retreated to link up with the New Kingdom army at the second fortress but—

「—Lux-kun! Be careful!」

The moment Lux escaped to the sky near the Garden, Coral's voice came to him.

The Gargoyle and Chimera that attacked from left and right were killed instantly by Lisha and Greifer respectively.

「Lisha-sama and Coral!? And even Greifer!? Why—」

「It's troublesome, but this is also a duty of an allied country yeah. More importantly.....」

Greifer suddenly gazed at the front of Garden with sharp eyes.

Over there was the figure of a girl in dress whose eyes were covered with shadow—the main body of Sacred Eclipse. A swarm of more than a hundred Abyss was swirling around it.

「It's that thing! As expected that thing is calling the Abyss here! No matter how many we defeat, the Abyss keep appearing one after another. If we don't destroy that Sacred Eclipse at least, even if we return to Cross Field like this—」

Lisha was glaring at the sky with her crimson eyes while breathing hard.

It seemed that Singlen's right hand man, Zweigberk was already leading the White Ridge knight order of the Blackend Kingdom to retreat.

In exchange it seemed the Drag-Knights of the New Kingdom military were coming as reinforcements, but they might get annihilated right away if they came to this battle situation.

「But it's strange yeah? Where did those damned Dragon Marauder lot vanish to? Drakkhen also ran away, the mysterious masked girl who Coral saw is also gone.」

Greifer grumbled with an annoyed tone.

Right behind him, there were the figures of the Triad whose armors were dispelled because they had already surpassed their limit.

「Yes. My deepest apologies. I detected their presence broadly until the middle, but their signal cut off somehow in the sky. Also Lux-san, even Airi got kidnapped—」

「.....-!？」

That report caused Lux's complexion to change and he stopped breathing.

Seeing Noct's figure that was gasping for air, it must be something that was outside her power.

Coral who was similarly anxious called to Lux who couldn't say anything.

「I'm sorry Lux-kun. If only I didn't let that masked Drag-Knight get away—」

「Right now that doesn't matter!」

Lisha lifted up her sword resolutely in response to the dejected Coral.

「There isn't any time to feel frustrated about the enemy's trap that we didn't notice! No matter what Dragon Marauder's objective is, if they kidnapped the little sister, then they should contact us later for negotiating hostage!」

Lisha raised her voice to rouse up everyone there.

If Lux and the others were swallowed by fear and despair here, the battle line would break.

If that happened, they wouldn't be able to save Airi either way.

「Thank you very much, Lisha-sama.」

Lux recovered his calm hearing her voice and said his thanks briefly. He then stared forward.

Certainly, if the enemy planned to kill Airi, they could easily do so.

For them to kidnap her meant that they had intentions to make use of her for something.

「Even so, how are we going to fight this time? This situation is completely jumbled up. I don't get what the hell is going on.」

Greifer spoke casually while glaring at the Garden and the first fortress.

Certainly this time the motives of various forces were all mixed up.

Lux took a deep breath and quickly sorted out the situation in his mind.

Queen Raffi of the New Kingdom requested Lux and Lisha to bury the Grand Force inside Garden so that they wouldn't be suspected of secretly keeping it.

But, Singlen who saw through that made his White Ridge knight order to hide inside Garden beforehand, laying a trap to catch Lux red handed.

Singlen's aim of grasping Lux's weakness to add him under his command ended in vain, but Dragon Marauder that was similarly hiding inside the Ruin snatched away the Grand Force and then they called a lot of Abyss.

The three division commanders of Dragon Marauder were all present, and then the Drag-Knight who was employing and cooperating with them—the masked girl also appeared and battled Coral.

Outside the Garden, Yoruka who was convinced of Singlen's scheme resolved herself to assassinate him and infiltrated the first fortress, but she failed.

When Lux came to save Yoruka, Sacred Eclipse appeared and then they escaped. But then a swarm of Abyss in a number that was incomparable to before appeared around the Sacred Eclipse.

After that, Zweigbergk led away the White Ridge knight order and retreated. In this situation, Lux and the others similarly had to escape from here.

But, if they didn't defeat Sacred Eclipse that showed up once more, they also couldn't go back to Cross Field like this.

Lisha turned around while breathing roughly from exhaustion and raised her voice.

「Either way, we have to defeat that monster at any cost. Can you fight, Lux!？」

「—Yes.」

In a situation where once again more than a hundred strong Abyss swarmed between the wasteland and the blue sky, Lux nodded.

Right after that, the girl in dress standing far ahead—the Sacred Eclipse formed a wide grin on its mouth and came attacking with its flesh body.

The Triad who had become unable to operate their Drag-Rides anymore went into standby at the rear.

The enemy presence was near, but they were applying first aid treatment to the wounded Yoruka during this time.

The remaining combat force, Lux, Lisha, Greifer, and Coral engaged the Sacred Eclipse.

「Hah! You look like a spoiled young lady, but you're quite the tomboy huh.」

Sacred Eclipse flew towards them as though running on the air. In response Greifer wearing Cuelebre intercepted it and unleashed a slash in spiraling trajectory with his Tail Blade.

Using the blade of many joints, it was a powerful attack with a trajectory that was difficult to read.

Sacred Eclipse held its hand for defense, but the blade slipped through and suddenly split its head from the top into two.

「—!？」

Lux and Lisha opened their eyes widely seeing that brilliant performance.

But, beside them, Coral gasped in surprise.

「Greifer! Don't let your guard down!」

「.....!？」

「Ahaha, Greifer is really terrible.」

The Sacred Eclipse healed its wound while simultaneously changing its shape instantly. It created the shape of a different girl.

A girl wearing a dress with ornaments that looked like piled up flower petals,

with a golden tiara put on her brownish blonde hair.

It was a girl that Lux once saw when he took the Class promotion exam in the Vanheim Principality, Greifer's master, princess Milmiette. Sacred Eclipse transformed into her appearance.

Even if someone understood it in their mind that it was a fake, but if their important someone was right in front of their eyes, they would instinctively refuse to attack.

It might be a lag of an instant that was less than a second, but the moment Greifer's hand stopped, countless fleshy colored branches stabbed out from the whole body of Sacred Eclipse.

「—Photon Dive!」

The ability of invincibility of Cuelebre's Divine Raiment barely activated in time, repelling those countless branches.

「Wait Greifer! The enemy is right in the middle of those Abyss!」

Behind the Sacred Eclipse that was sent flying, the gathered Abyss that numbered nearly a hundred were standing by.

If Greifer threw himself into there, he would be safe for a few seconds, but after that there was a high possibility that he would be showered with concentrated fire.

But, Greifer didn't back down even knowing the danger.

「Certainly that's true. But, if this monster is aiming for that then it's a really poor move yeah. Doesn't it know that reckless challenges are my hobby?」

In order to destroy the core of Sacred Eclipse here, Greifer closed in further and swung his Blade.

He cut apart the branches that were hard like steel and let out consecutive attacks in order to stab his blade into that heart.

「You are really cruel aren't you Greifer? Have you forgotten your gratitude to me?」

Sacred Eclipse tried to shake up Greifer once more with Milmiette's

appearance, but this time Greifer didn't falter.

He replied shortly while dealing an attack of his Blade at the same time.

「Sorry, but the princess already knows that I'm a rude guy. Too bad.」

「.....」

He cut off its two arms and then he was going to deal the finishing strike, but at that moment several hundred branches stretched out in high speed from the Sacred Eclipse's back.

They instantly stabbed into the Abysses that were hovering in the sky, and immediately after the stabbed Abysses dried up and crumbled.

「Get away Greifer! Sacred Eclipse is absorbing the Abysses' life force!」

Almost at the same time with Coral's scream, a portion of the branches attacked Greifer.

Because the invincibility of Photon Dive had just ended at that timing, Greifer shielded himself with his Blade, but the branches twisted and struck his side.

「Gu, a.....!」

Fortunately because Coral was nearby, he deftly caught him.

But, Greifer's barrier was pierced through and his armor smashed. He vomited out blood.

「That bastard.....! Copying the movement of my Tail Blade—」

Glancing at Greifer who was gritting his teeth, Lisha started at Sacred Eclipse with a dubious expression.

「This is weird Lux, isn't that Sacred Eclipse similar? With the Ragnarok that we fought previously—with Yggdrasil?」

「Yes. I also think so.」

Lux shuddered inside his heart.

Sacred Eclipse that they fought previously in the Campus Festival had the ability of tentacles and unlimited regeneration.

That was to say, it resembled the ability of the first Ragnarok that Lux and the

others fought—Poseidon.

From here it became a rough guess but, perhaps Sacred Eclipse was tracing the abilities of the Ragnarok that they had defeated until now.

「Then, those Abyss that are only flying around Sacred Eclipse, could they be the meal for it?」

「If it's a Ragnarok in the same type like Yggdrasil, the possibility is high. If I remember right, its trait should be strengthening and evolution. Each time it is defeated, it will acquire resistance and restore itself. In order to secure the energy for that, there is a possibility that it will not give any order to the Abyss around purposefully.」

Tillfur and Sharis were making such conjecture in the back while catching their breaths.

The same like the Yggdrasil that Hayes once manipulated, it was made to eat several hundred Abysses beforehand and secured energy source for its evolution.

「Yes. How it dealt with Greifer-san's sword too, if it is inheriting Yggdrasil's trait, it will be strengthened if we deal half-baked attacks to it here.」

Furthermore this time they had fewer battle force than that time.

And then, the three division commanders of Dragon Marauder were also hiding somewhere, and their employer was also lurking around.

「Then, there is no other choice but to shower it with simultaneous attacks. Even if we retreat from here while fighting, there is no way we can lead that thing back with us.」

It seemed everyone felt the same, everyone there consented at the same time.

Lux too, although he had his stamina and injury recovered, but he couldn't use Over Limit.

Previously, he used counterattack of Critical Hit to reflect back the attack power of Yggdrasil after it was strengthened to the limit, defeating it. But it was unclear whether the same method would work this time.

The method of making the opponent's strength evolve until the very limit also carried the risk of total annihilation for their side if they made the slightest mistake—it even might become the trigger of world destruction by creating an enemy that no one could defeat.

「—Yosh, then this time let's go with the safe plan. What's important is to defeat the surrounding Abysses first to make that Sacred Eclipse diet, it will be fine like that.」

If they destroyed the energy source of Sacred Eclipse, it wouldn't be able to evolve.

In other words, the strategy was to crush the swarm of several hundred Abyss in the surroundings, and then they would deal the finishing blow to Sacred Eclipse for the last.

「Even so, that damned vice-captain-sama. Even though he acted self-importantly, he is gone at the crucial time.」

「It's useless to even mind about that Greifer. More importantly, it looks like you don't have a broken bone but, can you still move?」

Coral stepped forward to take the role of attracting the enemy. Greifer scratched his head with a disagreeable expression at Coral's question.

「Honor student-sama is rough at working someone else as usual. Even though there are nothing but some defenseless bunches gasping for breath behind, there is no way I can slack off ain't it」

He spoke coarsely, but as expected he was good at taking care of someone else.

「Nicely said! Then, we are starting the strategy! Both of you, follow my command!」

Lisha spoke encouragingly and gave simple instructions through Dragon Voice.

While the decisive battle was going to start under an overwhelmingly disadvantageous situation, at the side—Yoruka who was receiving first-aid treatment from Noct and the others lifted up her upper body.

「Wai-!? What are you doing Yoruka-chi!? It's dangerous for you to move, your

wounds will open again.]

「Yes. As expected I also cannot overlook this as a friend. Please think about the feelings of your master Lux-san.]

Tillfur and Noct who were dressed in pilot suit tried to stop Yoruka in panic, but Yoruka didn't listen to them.

But, the reason why she was moving was different from before.

「It's alright. I won't do something so reckless that will bring me death. More importantly Noct-san, can I ask you to repair my Yato no Kami? It's greatly damaged but, its Force Core is safe so—」

Although she had her usual bewitching smile on her face, however her eyes informed them of the strong will inside her.

「I have no intention to rush into that swarm. I only want—one more chance to activate my Divine Raiment and special armament. In order to become Aruji-sama's strength, in a different way from before.]

「.....」

Yoruka's atmosphere was somewhat different from before, causing the three to hold their breaths.

The Triad also had no more spare strength to even protect themselves, but seeing Yoruka's eyes, Sharis resolved herself.

「Tillfur, we're going to put on the strengthened type Drag-Rides once more. We will transfer all our remaining strength to Noct's EX Drake. Let's repair Yato no Kami as much as possible with that.]

「Wait a second!? If we do that, we won't even have any strength left to walk away from here—」

「Either way we won't be able to assist Lux-kun and the others anyway, so it's pointless to keep any spare strength like that! Thinking about the matter of Airi getting kidnapped, it should be something trivial for us to at least be reckless here.]

「——」

Although there were many extenuating circumstances, it was a fact that Airi was taken away right under their noses.

Thinking how Lux was standing on the front line and fought in their place even then, then certainly there was no way they could just stay still here.

「It's alright, even if you three don't force yourselves.」

Yoruka who was wrapped in bandages gasped with feeble breathing.

「This is only my selfishness. I am only unable to bear it, to keep laying down like this without being able to be of any use as Aruji-sama's servant.」

That was Yoruka's true feeling.

Lux was considering herself not as tool, but as a person who was irreplaceable for the sake of accomplishing his ideal.

Then, there was no way she could just stay still like this like a meaningless tool.

In order to realize Lux's ideal, as the sword of the Black Hero who brought salvation, she had to fight until the very end.

「—What, if it's like that, then it's the same for us.」

Tillfur suddenly showed a smile and put on her EX Wyrm once more.

She approached beside Noct who was similarly putting on her EX Drake and linked a cord to it and started transferring her remaining energy.

「Yeah. Even we hate it to be in a battle where we are only getting protected by him even though we introduced ourselves as Syvalles, that's why we trained really hard.」

Sharis also stood up wobblingly while connecting the cord of her EX Wyvern with her best effort.

Noct who received the slight remaining energy from the two began to repair Yato no Kami while gasping for breath.

She performed temporary repairs that was focused on the Force Core, fixing only a bit of armor and the firing muzzle for the special armament.

Yoruka's aim for making her choice to wish which part to repair.

She wouldn't simply dedicate her strength to Lux, for the first time she was trying to cooperate with him.

She was relying on everyone's strength, and on top of that she noticed that she would be doing something reckless.

「If that's the case, then we are the same.」

Noct's face was completely haggard, even so she made a faint smile.

Yoruka stayed still on that spot, looking fixedly on Lux's back in order to squeeze out her last remaining strength.

Part 5

On the other hand, around that time Airi wasn't between the wasteland and the blue sky, she was inside a room that also wasn't within Garden.

It was a strange space with smooth metallic walls that were tinged with faint light, and unfamiliar structures assembled together on top of each other.

That place which closely resembled the internal structure of a Ruin was clearly the enemy's base.

The air of the place was thick with tension that made her hesitate to even breath. There Airi was standing still without even trembling.

There were several times when she thought she was going to die.

When she was a sickly child, she was living side by side with death everyday. Even when her grandfather roused the anger of the Old Empire, also the time her mother died in an accident, and also after the coup d'etat, she was made to stand at the crossroad of life and death every time.

And then, even after Lux came to the Academy she experienced it several more times.

In this short time that didn't even reach a year, they fought against powerful enemies many times.

She was kidnapped by the enemy in the Vanheim Principality and became a hostage.

Since then, she was covertly carrying a short sword and poison without telling anyone—not even her best friend Noct, so that she could perform suicide anytime.

Although only at the lowest position, she was still a former imperial princess, that was why she was resolved for at least that much.

What Airi feared the most wasn't her death, it was that her life would be used as a negotiation chip against Lux.

Of course, Airi didn't want to intentionally commit suicide and lose her chance for escape, but it would be a failure if she was late in making her decision.

Thus, in order to ascertain the path her destiny was heading, she was observing the tendency of her surroundings tensely.

It was a room where a wall surface was reflecting the scenery of the Garden's surrounding, including the battle of Lux and the others.

The masked girl who kidnapped Airi, and a petite girl wearing robe who was obeying that girl were also there.

And then, the three division commanders of Dragon Marauder, the enemy of the world, were also standing there.

「—We finished our work. With this we will have you pay us our reward at the dawn of your rule over Avalon.」

First a muscular man with darkish skin handed over the large treasure box he was carrying.

The masked girl glanced inside it to confirm the content, then she turned her gaze towards Airi who was standing a bit far away.

「I will keep my promise, but don't speak needlessly that others will hear. Haven't you worked in the mercenary business for a long time, Gatouhan?」

The masked girl chided the dark skinned man with a voice that was as emotionless as her appearance.

The large man sighed 'fuh' with a wry smile while bowing courteously.

「Excuse my rudeness. Even like this I was previously the head of a 『savage tribe』. My loose lip is a bad habit from birth.」

「You immediately spoke needlessly right after getting told that. How astonishing.」

「Gatouhan put on air like a big shot, but he is unexpectedly stupid.」

Contractor-sama too, please let him off.]

Drakkhen with her female bandit appearance standing beside Gatouhan folded her arms sarcastically, while the youth Vine spoke bluntly.

But, the masked girl was curt.

「It looks like you are lacking in tension. Even though we still have to remove that Sacred Eclipse too.」

She only muttered that before giving a signal with her gesture, making the three division commanders to leave to another room.

When the metallic door opened and closed automatically, the little girl in robe who was at the corner of the room until now approached Airi slowly.

「-.....!? Don't come near me!」

Airi alertly backed away and grasped the handle of the short blade in her pocket.

She also took out a bag that was filled with poison.

「Stop resisting pointlessly. Do you want to die without seeing your brother's face again?」

「It's better to die rather than getting used by you all! If I'm going to become Nii-san's burden here then—」

Airi raised her voice and steadied her short blade, then she pointed it to her throat.

She had resolved to be killed by other people several times before, but she had hesitation to do it herself.

The voice of reason which told her that she should stab herself right away was fighting the voice of instinct that told her she mustn't die.

She recalled the face of Lux who waited upon the sickly her and tear almost oozed out. She reflexively endured it.

「You don't want to die but, you won't become a hostage.....is it? It can't be helped, let's stop that.」

「.....Eh?」

Airi was taken aback and her eyes blinked hearing the words of the masked girl that were said emotionlessly without any inflection.

When Airi was staring at the enemy before her while doubting her ears, the girl silently took off her mask.

「Then—make a contract with us. There is one thing that I want you to do. If you do that for us, I will let you go safely. I also won't take you hostage.」

「—!？」

The moment Airi saw the exposed face, she became speechless.

That was the face of a girl she remembered seeing just once before at the campus festival.

Part 6

「—Damn, it all-!」

On the other hand, at the fierce fight against Sacred Eclipse that was unfolding far below the kidnapped Airi, a terrifying situation presented itself.

「What, in the world.....! This thing, it's entering a different world of troublesome compared to Yggdrasil!」

Lisha shouted loudly while throwing her Legions to attack the Abyss.

But, the attack that before this should deal some damage even if it couldn't defeat the enemy was easily dodged by Gargoyles and Chimeras.

It wasn't that her precision in controlling Tiamat was worsening, but the enemy reaction speed that was exceeding her accuracy.

「These guys, don't tell me—. No, as I thought.....they are growing!」

Coral was also muttering in frustration while the middle sized Blade he swung was dodged.

Even when his attack landed, his Blade would be deflected by the enemy's skin and cracks were starting to enter the blade.

「Ahahahahahahahaha」

Sacred Eclipse was cackling eerily while stretching its branches to the surrounding Abysses.

At first they thought that Sacred Eclipse was only absorbing energy from the Abyss, but when Lux and the others aimed at the surrounding Abyss, it immediately began to stab its branches towards the remaining dozens of Abyss.

With that, the body of the Abyss swelled or their shape would change. They were starting to evolve.

They might get defeated before they could defeat the surrounding Abyss that

were its energy source.

「Lux! Don't use your Divine Raiment! We will do something about this right now!」

The swarm of Abyss was transformed into powerful enemies that even Bahamut would struggle against. When Lisha yelled so in front of such enemy, Lux obeyed her words and suppressed his strength.

Lux was also starting to suspect the omen of the enemy's terrifying tactic.

(This is bad. It's the same like the previous Sacred Eclipse, this thing is Yggdrasil's evolved variant.) It wasn't merely using Abyss as food for its own evolution, it could even grant the resistance and evolution it obtained to the surrounding Abyss to strengthen them.

Like that, even the surrounding Abyss were transformed into powerful enemies that couldn't be defeated without getting reckless, then the technique and ability used to defeat those Abyss would be absorbed back to Sacred Eclipse.

While they were defeating the hangers-on, an Evolved Sacred Eclipse that was beyond their means would be born.

(What to do—? Everyone who is fighting in my place won't hold out for long.) With how he was unable to use Over Limit, it was impossible to defeat the enemy with Critical Hit after strengthening it.

Then—the technique that applied Reload on Fire which Lux had newly invented—Violent Strike, there was no other way than that.

Violent Strike, the technique to make the enemy's movement and ability rampage by activating Reload on Fire on the enemy and stopping their movement.

It was another matter if it was against a Drag-Knight, but he thought it would be ineffective against powerful creatures like the Ragnarok, but—

(A chance of victory, exists.....!)

Lux felt a conviction after observing the surrounding Abyss that were strengthened by Sacred Eclipse.

It was hard to see because they were strengthened a lot, but the Abysses that had their evolution spurred by Sacred Eclipse were starting to crumble from the tips of their limbs.

A lot of energy was necessary to evolve them in short time, putting a burden on their flesh.

Putting aside Sacred Eclipse itself that was a Ragnarok, normal Abyss wouldn't hold out for long. Their body was ruined from being unable to endure the strengthening.

If the speed of that abnormal evolution and regeneration jumped up by several times, even Sacred Eclipse would inevitably use up its energy, or it would start to break down due to the excessive evolution.

At that moment, the core of its breaking body could be destroyed using Quick Shot.

Lux's plan was created on the fly, however he was made to realize that the plan was really far away from being accomplished.

「U, aah.....!？」

Coral who got the back wings of his EX Wyvern smashed by a Diablos was sent flying to the ground.

Greifer took on the Abyss in Coral's place, but he had no choice other than betting his full strength facing a top tier Abyss that was strengthened.

On the other hand Lisha was also approached by a strengthened Orthros and she was forced to eliminate it using Suppressor's gravity force and Seven Heads in conjunction.

「Now-! I'll deal a blow on you in front of Lux!」

Right after that, Lisha flew to the front of Sacred Eclipse that was trying to crawl its branch on the defeated Abyss and she activated Tiamat's Divine Raiment once more.

Energy was focused at the center of Seven Heads' firing muzzle.

She intended to fire the sure kill gravity force bullet that she showed at the decisive battle with Hayes.

But—at that instant, Sacred Eclipse suddenly changed appearances.

「Is it alright Lisha? Clinging like that to the likes of the Empire's prince? Refusing to commit suicide and change sides to the Empire, your dead little sister won't be able to rest in peace.」

「Tsu.....!？」

Sacred Eclipse would read the hearts of the opponent it fought and traced the appearance of the human that could be said as the opponent's weakness.

The one who showed up in front of Lisha was a man in his prime with similar blonde hair and crimson eyes.

Her father who died in battle at the revolution, the great man Count Atismata.

「—Shu, uT UPPPPPPPP-!？」

Instantly, Lisha yelled as though to force down all the emotions boiling up inside her body.

Lisha had also heard about the transformation trait of Sacred Eclipse from Celis and Lux who had fought it. But even with that knowledge she was unable to endure it, which was a troublesome point of this enemy.

The enemy would change its appearance into an existence that was important to them—no, it was even further than that, it changed into an existence that became their weakness.

Even though they understood that it was just a fake appearance, their humanity, senses, and instinct would reject that logic.

It was a weakness that existed due to them being proper humans.

To perfectly conquer that weakness, they had to stop being human.

Lisha forcefully break through it, even so that instant of delay brought about a lethal opening.

「Lisha-sama!」

The moment purple light bullet—gravity force bullet was fired from the muzzle and impacted, Sacred Eclipse stretched its branches and

counterattacked.

Several branches flew toward Lisha and smashed Tiamat's armor, at the same time several branches that were stretched backward absorbed life force from the surrounding Abysses.

「OGU-, GUOEeeeeEEUEEEUE-.....!」

Right after that, the crackling gravity bullet swallowed Sacred Eclipse, breaking its limbs and it started to crumble.

(It's not perfectly settled! But, the chance is only now—!)

Lux resolved himself like that and grasped Bahamut's control stick in order to execute Violent Strike.

He headed towards the Sacred Eclipse and flew with full speed. The moment he was going to slash the blade of his great sword with the fastest speed, a girl's voice reached his ear.

『Don't.....Aruji-sama』

「—!？」

Lux faltered for a moment towards the voice of Yoruka that came to him through Dragon Voice.

The moment his dash was delayed, Lisha readied her large cannon to fire additional attack from Seven Heads.

And then Greifer used Photon Dive and slashed from behind, but both were sent flying simultaneously.

「What.....-!？」

Both of them yelled uneasily together.

In front of them, Sacred Eclipse with its half broken body regenerated its body with a repulsive smile and transformed into the appearance of the girl in dress once more.

「This bastard already adapted to the Divine Raiment of us two in this short time!？」

The weakness of Greifer's Photon Dive was the moment he touched the

enemy from his initiative, the light of his invincibility would cut off only at the part that came into contact with the enemy.

In other words, if an unmoving enemy directly released attack like shockwave from their body in the instant of that contact, it was possible to counterattack even with the invincibility active.

Regarding Lisha's Suppressor, it was simply obtaining pure resistance to gravity.

The speed of evolution and adaptability that exceeded the imagination caused everyone there to shudder.

(This is bad.....! If the sure kill by Reload on Fire misses even once, there won't be any more chance for me to stop Sacred Eclipse!) But, if he wasn't stopped by Yoruka's voice just now, he would have been intercepted without doubt.

Sacred Eclipse was completely alert against Lux too while facing Lisha, Coral, and Greifer.

Just like how Lux tried to read the enemy's attack's preliminary movement using his discernment and experience, Sacred Eclipse was also learning even Lux's observing eye.

(What to do!? Lisha-sama and Coral, even Greifer cannot fight properly anymore. There is also no time, at this rate—) When Lux made a distressed expression like that, a voice came to him once more from Yoruka who was lurking at the rear.

『Aruji-sama, will you listen to my plan? There is a chance to defeat that Sacred Eclipse.』

When Lux twisted his body slightly to look behind, he saw Yoruka there on her knee, wearing Yato no Kami that only had a part of its shoulder repaired.

『You must not Yoruka! Stop acting reckless already! If you fight more than this, you will—』

『Please let her do this, Lux-san.』

Beside Yoruka, Noct sent him her voice immediately to calm him down.

Even though her tone was calm just like how she usually was, there was a strong will filling her voice.

While Lux was bewildered by that, Sharis and Tillfur also sent him their voices.

『I'm also asking you this Lux-kun. She isn't planning to disregard your feelings. Surely she is trying to do the opposite.』

『Yoruka-chi is considering your will.....or something? Perhaps, it's something like that I think. That's why, listen to her. Because we who are the most useless here also entrusted our feelings to her!』

「.....」

Yoruka's feeling that was different from before.

She wasn't just thinking about Lux's sake and fought, she was also trying to consider his will.

Not in order to become a sacrifice.

It was a method that Yoruka herself could do using her all, and then—

『Please allow me to use Aruji-sama's body just for a moment. I swear that I will send Aruji-sama until that instant before Aruji-sama's attack using Reload on Fire.』

「Yoruka—」

Lux guessed her intention from her words and her appearance that was intentionally wearing Yato no Kami.

He also guessed at the same time why Yoruka also took off the bandage covering her left eye.

Right after that, in front of him the eyes of Sacred Eclipse shined and it devoured several more Abyss. At that moment it flew towards Lux.

「Run away Lux! That thing is learning to predict the enemy just like you!」

Lisha wearing Tiamat yelled while being soaked with blood. Lux moved at the same time.

At this rate they wouldn't be able to win.

He readied his great sword to intercept the enemy even while he understood that. At that timing, letters that looked like a spell faintly shined on the armor of Bahamut.

—

「—Instant Strike」

—

He felt like he could hear the voice of Yoruka who was far in the rear even without Dragon Voice.

Sacred Eclipse mimicked Lux's foresight and took a stance to intercept him based on his preliminary motion, but it was completely taken by surprise and received an attack from his Blade.

It was a special move that was only allowed for Yoruka who read the wavelengths of consciousness using her devilish eye and made use of that opening.



It wasn't just the Sacred Eclipse that was taken by surprise, Lisha who was watching from the side was also the same.

「Lux's Instant Strike!? No, don't tell me—」

「A string is, stretching from behind.....?」

Just as what Coral muttered, a steel string was connected to Bahamut's back wing.

In other words, due to Yato no Kami's Spell Code, Yoruka controlled Bahamut like a puppet and unleashed that single strike.

She overlapped her technique on Lux's body and Drag-Ride.

It was a combination technique that was impossible to perform without her trusting other people and entrusting her heart to him.

If it was the Yoruka from before, she wouldn't be able to even think up this attack that surpassed the ability of a Ragnarok.

「Now—Reload on Fire!」

Right after that, Lux who was released from the binding of Spell Code activated Reload on Fire.

He didn't compress and strengthen his own time, but decelerated the speed of his opponent. After doing that, in the time that was stretched by several times over he would unleash the special move—Violent Strike.

He would deal countless slashes from above the core of the enemy that was in the state of nearly a complete pause.

「—Gu, OOO, OOOoUU.....!?」

Due to the deceleration of time, even the shriek that Sacred Eclipse let out echoed dully.

And then—five seconds later, the countless slash lines that were carved on its chest were tinged with light, which shifted into destructive power that assaulted to one spot.

Sacred Eclipse was blown away with super speed to the ground below while sparks scattered intensely from near the core in its heart where the impact

collided.

「—!？」

But, an unexpected miscalculation for Lux occurred here.

Based on the feedback from the core destruction of Metatron that was also a Ragnarok he fought just the other day, the Sacred Eclipse's core should be destroyed from the attack just now.

And yet this time the destruction stopped at only the core surface.

(Is it growing, that even its resistance is rising higher than the Sacred Eclipse I defeated with Celis-senpai previously!?) A Ragnarok that would revive after a period of time even after its core was broken and became an even stronger specimen—Sacred Eclipse.

Lux felt its terror once more while he pursued the Sacred Eclipse that was sent flying to deal the finishing blow.

It shouldn't be able to move yet due to the damage right after it got showered with consecutive attacks.

It was barely surviving, but if it was now he could defeat it.

Thinking that, he was going to deal even more attacks to it, but then Sacred Eclipse transformed into a different appearance.

Smooth blonde hair that was tied into a sidetail and crimson eyes.

It was the appearance of the Princess of the New Kingdom who Lux served, Lizsharte.

—

「—Please Lux! Stop it! Don't kill me again!」

—

「—!？」

When he saw that, some kind of shuddering chill ran through Lux's body.

At the same time his body stiffened still from terror.

(.....What does, it mean? Again?)

He completely understood that Sacred Eclipse transformed into an existence that was the opponent's weak point, and Lux intended to swing his sword with the resolve of that.

Whether it would be his mother who died in an accident, or his father the emperor, or his little sister Airi, or his comrades from the Academy—, he intended to force down any agitation that might well up inside him, and yet now his hand stopped completely.

Why was that?

It wasn't a coincidence.

Right now he simply wasn't aware of it, but seeing this figure of Lisha, he felt like he knew something.

Lux knew about this something that Sacred Eclipse was saying to him.

(Is it because of my lost memory, no.....that's not it! The me right now is imagining it? What is this, this sensation—) It was no good, he couldn't swing his sword.

The moment he thought that, the real Lisha raised her voice.

「.....Do it! Lux! Don't get led astray by that kind of fake! I am the real thing!」

Bahamut's armor automatically moved almost at the same time with Lisha's yell.

Spell Code.

The special armament steel string, Kumo no Ito connected to Bahamut, and Yoruka gave the command in Lux's place.

—But, Sacred Eclipse reacted to that and instantly transformed its appearance.

A black haired boy who resembled Lux with a little trace of innocence remaining in him.

(Could it be, this boy is—Yoruka's)

Lux guessed that he might be Yoruka's little brother from his face that resembled Lux and also had a trace of Yoruka's features.

But, Lux and Yoruka didn't hesitate.

Right after that, he slipped through the branches that stabbed in counterattack and landed a blow with all his might.

「—U, oooooooooooooOH!」

The cracks on the core flickered with a flash and broke apart into pieces.

The greatest Ragnarok, Sacred Eclipse that showed its figure for the second time finally fell.

「Ku, kukukukuku.....」

Sacred Eclipse was bisected in that young boy appearance. It vanished along with a faint smile.

Lux was breathing hard while looking down quietly on it.

「Thank you Yoruka, for giving me a push on the back—」

He slowly turned around before long. Until now his movement were manipulated by the Kumo no Ito.

The figure of the unfamiliar young boy in the end was a figure that Sacred Eclipse showed because it suspected even that.

「Also sorry. For making you attack the appearance of your little brother—」

「There is no problem.」

Yoruka dispelled the armor fragment of Yato no Kami and she powerlessly fell down.

Noct and Tillfur supported her from the left and right while she made a powerless smile.

「I don't have a human heart, so I'm all right.」

「—No. You're wrong.」

Lux who heard that quietly shook his head and smiled.

「I think that surely, Yoruka killed your heart for my sake. At the very least, I believe that you aren't a human without a heart. That's why—I'm sorry. Thank you.」

Yoruka's eyes opened wide in astonishment for a moment hearing Lux's words.

And then, she averted her eyes slightly as though in embarrassment and smiled.

「Perhaps that is so. If those are the words of none other than Aruji-sama, I will believe it.」

「Right. Surely that is so—」

This time Yoruka seemed to exhaust all her strength for real. Her eyes closed slowly and tension left her body.

Noct who was holding her checked her pulse, but it seemed she only fainted.

The girl who was treated by her surrounding as not human and who continued to affirm it herself until now.

Lux was happy from his heart that she was entrusting her feelings to him for the first time.

It felt like her feelings that were sealed by the word contract had softened slightly.

「Oi! What are you two doing flirting like that! There are still enemies remaining here!」

「That's right. Even though it should still be my turn to guard Lux-kun.」

While Lux was thinking of such thing, Lisha got angry and Coral spoke jealously.

「Eh, wait!? That's not my intention—」

Lux stared intensely to the front just as he was told even while getting flustered.

The countless Abyss had been liberated from Sacred Eclipse's control. First they had to escape from here but—

That moment when he was about to take his stance, a familiar voice reached him from behind.

「Lux! Are you safe!?」

A golden Drag-Knight appeared from the blue sky.

The captain of Syvalles who Lux felt respect and affection for, Celistia was there.

「Celis-senpai!? Why are you here—?」

「It's not just her Lux-kun. It looks like it's not a mistake for me to rush here because of this bad feeling in my chest.」

The one who said that and appeared from the opposite direction was Krulcifer wearing Fafnir.

「I am, also here you know?」

In addition the one who appeared skating on the wasteland was Philuffy who should be resting because of her body condition.

Most likely she was notified of this predicament and she came here ignoring Relie's order to rest.

「Protect Lizsharte-sama!」

「Form formation and charge! Don't let those things touch our country's princess!」

「You guys, you all also came?」

It wasn't just the familiar girls, the Drag-Knights of the New Kingdom military also rushed here from Cross Field for them.

Their number was more than fifty.

Although the number of the surviving Abyss were about double than that, if Celis and others were here, Lux estimated that they would be able to fight for the time being.

What was left was to search for Dragon Marauder who seemed to make all these Abyss appear and take Airi back somehow—

(Please stay safe.....Airi)

Lux was already wounded all over, even so he glared strongly to the sky. Right after that—a strange sound thundered at the surroundings.

—III-iIIIIII-!

「.....Kuh, this sound, again.」

First Greifer who sensed the sound of a horn flute complained. The whole troops readied themselves.

But, instead of attacking, the Abyss swarm turned around and flew high into the sky. They were wrapped by faint light before long and their figures vanished.

「—They are retreating!? No, the movement just now.....」

「That was, transfer.....!」

Coral wearing his half broken EX Wyvern muttered with a dubious expression.

Next Celis landed beside Lux and whispered with an urgent look.

「Please be careful Lux. Lady Magialca and I found something in the abandoned capital of the Marcafal Kingdom. The existence of Avalon that is protected by the Abyss— And also, the traces of where the seventh Ruin, Moon was heading to.」

「Avalon, is in the Marcafal Kingdom!? No more importantly, the Moon was moving you say—?」

Celis who went to the Marcafal Kingdom due to the aide exchange could return back here should only be if there was a really important matter.

「As for me, the circumstance is different but it's something similar.」

Before Lux could ponder about it, Krulcifer also muttered beside him.

「While Mel is unable to move due to her recuperation, someone secretly infiltrated into the Hall. I heard that from Ney Louches. Who was able to enter and what did they bring out? I followed their trace and arrived to this direction.」

「They, brought out something?」

Lux felt a bad premonition hearing her words.

He couldn't imagine that the Dragon Marauder would expressly steal treasure from inside the Hall.

If there was a situation that even the Gear Leader, Ney Louches couldn't prevent from happening—

At that moment when Lux was trying to reach the heart of the matter, a blue pillar of light suddenly descended from the spot near where the Abyss suddenly vanished.

The girl floating inside that light pillar was abruptly thrown out to the sky powerlessly from there.

「—Airi!？」

Lux yelled and flew his Bahamut at full speed.

He caught her body that almost free falled and she powerlessly smiled.

「Good grief. You are too slow, Nii-san.」

「Are you all right Airi!? Are you injured!? Just what happened—!?」

Lux forgot himself and rattled on in panic. Airi gently put her finger on his lips and quietly put her arms around his shoulders.

「There is no need to worry about me. I changed the subject a bit when talking, found an opening and escaped, that's all. After all I am far more skilled with getting by in the world compared to Nii-san who keeps doing reckless things.」

「.....I guess, you're right.」

He let go his hand from the control stick and embraced his little sister tightly with his own hands.

He was about to make a request to the Drag-Knights of the New Kingdom military to bring her away from here to a safe place along with Yoruka and the others who were injured, it was then the scenery above the sky warped.

—WIIIIIIIIII!

「-.....!？」

Right after a presence that felt prickling to the skin like a burn, a giant sphere appeared in the blue sky.

Even though it should be far away, high in the sky, but it was so gigantic that the full figure of its outline couldn't be grasped.

A huge moon that was several sizes larger even compared to the royal castle of the New Kingdom.

The spherical castle that was clad in a dazzling phosphorescence was floating there majestically.

「Silver, moon.....?」

Lisha was gazing in wonderment at that presence which was overwhelming anyone who saw it while slipping out a mutter.

Celis and Krulcifer, Philuffy and Yoruka.

Greifer and Coral, and not just them, everyone of the New Kingdom military who was witnessing that sight were similarly overwhelmed by that sight which was beyond imagination.

The Seventh Ruin—Moon.

The last Ruin that was completely untraceable until now even with all the countries using all their might.

Right now it suddenly appeared in front of them.

「I see, so that's the reason a lot of the Abyss showed up here before Sacred Eclipse even appeared.」

Lux consented with what Greifer pointed out.

Since the start that Ruin was already there. They were only unable to see it.

The Seventh Ruin—Moon.

That Ruin which possessed a great amount of Abysses was letting them out while hiding right in front of them.

With that fact, the other puzzle inevitably also fell into place.

It was highly possible that Dragon Marauder members who appeared from

somewhere and vanished suddenly also came and went from there.

When everyone there realized that and looked up to the sky once more, —
『—Informing all of you dear ladies and gentlemen』

—

A girl's voice suddenly resounded loudly in the area, at the same time a huge three dimensional image was projected above the wasteland.

The masked girl wearing robe that they happened to see before this.

Lux and the others saw that in contrast to her words, there weren't any friendly signs from her.

『My name is, Soffice Xfer. A descendant of the clan that you all call as the Xfer Key's Supervisor.』

「.....-!？」

Lux sensed Krulcifer who was listening to that beside him stiffen.

There was another comrade of hers other than Mishis who was joining hands with the Lords.

And then, it was actually the Seven Dragon Paladin of Turkimes Confederation—Soffice.

The girl in the three dimensional image took off her mask.

Brown skin and black hair, a face with a scarlet tattoo on it. Without a doubt it was her.

At the same time, her little sister who introduced herself as Uruk was also standing beside her. She took off her hood and showed her face.

Ears that looked like fox's ears were growing out from her forehead.

『Automaton— as expected she is.....!』

Yes, the strange occurrence that they talked about before Krulcifer departed to the Ymir Theocracy.

Uruk reacted to Krulcifer's voice was because she was an Automaton. She possessed a trait where she had to obey a Xfer.

「This is a warning. All troops, as well as the Seven Dragon Paladins are to gather in the New Kingdom and stand by. Conquering the Ruin more than this is forbidden. Don't come near the Ruin. I will bestow punishment if this warning is violated.」

Soffice informed with an assertive tone that broke no argument.

That was to say, she was saying that she was the traitor within the world alliance.

「Punishment? What, are you planning to reveal yourself suddenly like this!? It's you who are surrounded here!」

「.....」

When Lisha reflexively declared that, the Moon's surface shined faintly.

Right after that, a terrific rumbling reverberated, and the Garden vibrated in response.

「—I thought you will say that. I will show proof.」

After saying that with a bland voice, a gigantic Abyss appeared.

One right under the moon, and one more from beside the Garden.

Their appearance couldn't be seen clearly because they were covered by shadow, but the intense killing intent and the mass of their body made the whole army surrounding them to tremble in fear.

「O, oi wait..... What the hell is that.....」

「I have never seen that kind of huge Abyss until—no!」

The Drag-Knights of the New Kingdom military who were still young shivered when they saw that.



Even they who had no experience of battling Abyss immediately understood.

Those things that were gathered together by several for the first time, were the Abyss of the greatest and strongest class that were called as Ragnarok.

「Surrender—is not what I intend to say. However I won't allow any opposition, including from the Lords. I will have all of you to stay still obediently until we reach Avalon.」

- Silence*..... the threat that Soffice made caused everyone to be unable to move.

—But, more than ten seconds later, one of the soldiers raised his voice.

「Do, don't screw around!」

「That's right, you think we will let a dictator like you to rule this world!」

「Stop it! Everyone!」

Lisha immediately lifted her hand to stop her subordinates, but right after that a thick beam of light was fired to right below the Moon, blowing away the spirit of everyone.

Thunderous sound and shockwave that impacted the ground at a far distance blew away even sound and voice, gouging the ground.

「.....」

Fortunately the location was an empty place without anyone there.

In exchange, a part of the wasteland that was extending flatly had a bottomless crevice spreading there.

「I liberated the Moon's ability and put it under my control. Its ability isn't just bombardment. It can also control the remaining three Abyss and give them simple instructions.」

The two gigantic Ragnarok that gathered right under the Moon proved Soffice's words.

「If you all don't do anything unnecessary, all the countries starting from the New Kingdom won't be swallowed by the flames of war. If you understand,

don't lay your hand on the Ruins and Avalon anymore from here on.]

Soffice only told that and the hologram vanished. The two Ragnarok were absorbed inside the Moon.

And then the Moon which possessed overwhelming destructive and controlling power vanished like smoke.

「What is going on? No, what will happen to us—」

Lisha spoke while looking up to the sky in a daze. There was no one who could answer her.

Lux could only gently hold the hand of his master to give her encouragement.

Epilogue – Sword And Scabbard

Part 1

The seventh Ruin that suddenly appeared in front of Lux and the others was searched for after that, but it couldn't be found.

It seemed that the betrayal of Soffice Septy was also unexpected for Turkimes Confederation. They were blamed by all the other countries, but unexpectedly Listelka put in some words to stop that.

『Right now isn't the time for the remaining countries to quarrel with each other. Also, this might sound like retracting our previous statement, but we have no intention to destroy the country where the traitor was staying at.』

Looking from the reaction of the Lords, it was likely that this incident was half unexpected for them. Magialca told Lux that after the world summit that was held once more.

「How do you know that?」

When Lux asked her in the corridor of the government building where the summit took place, she put on a twisted smile like usual.

「Fuh, this is not like the intelligent you. It's simple reasoning. Those bunches wish for the Xfer lot to maintain neutrality at minimum. Even though they are acting conceitedly that they are the legitimate inheritors of Avalon, it won't look good if they are betrayed by their alliance partner right?」

Hearing that, Lux was also able to accept it.

The Lords and Soffice were actually not connected. Turkimes Confederation

also didn't know that Soffice was actually a Xfer.

The seventh Ruin, Moon which revealed its ability to hide, was equipped with immense offensive power and the power to call the remaining three Abysses with its Grand Force installed in it.

At present, the New Kingdom was being aimed with that as hostage and it was put in a situation where the New Kingdom couldn't protest at all.

This time they came to understand a lot of things, while at the same time, other inexplicable matters also came to light.

The Grand Force that was left behind in the New Kingdom. They completely thought that it was the Grand Force of the Garden, but it seemed that it was actually the Moon's Grand Force.

How did the old empire obtain the Grand Force of the Moon?

And then, why a Key's Supervisor, Soffice Xfer and her little sister Uruk who was actually an Automaton named Re Plica rebelled against the world alliance?

They even borrowed the strength of that Dragon Marauder and ignored the Lords that originally should be in a trusted and cooperative relationship with the Xfer—

What happened between them and the Lords, and between them and the Old Empire?

「I don't understand.....」

After school, inside the library, Lux closed the book regarding the Ruins that he was reading for a diversion and he spoke to himself.

The emergency world summit was over, and the Seven Dragon Paladins as well as the leaders' representatives of the various countries had left the New Kingdom. It was decided that for the time being they would wait and see.

But, there was also no way they could keep accepting Soffice's demand like this while holding their breath in anxiety.

In other words, during the two months from now, a great clash would surely occur.

Right now the Ruin conquering was put on hold due to the threat of Soffice, but if this situation continued, the Ruins would be conquered by them, the traitors.

In other words, the world alliance would surely take a forced plan to secure the remaining Ruins as soon as they prepared their forces, even if they had to sacrifice the New Kingdom for it.

At that time, what should the New Kingdom do?

As long as Soffice existed as a hostile, this situation might be impossible to change.

「.....」

Although, it wasn't like all that happened was all bad.

Although Yoruka was heavily injured and she would be unable to fight for a while, her life wasn't at risk, and the kidnapped Airi was also able to return safely.

Noct who felt especially responsible was terribly happy. It was to the degree that she embraced Airi spontaneously when they reunited.

Noct was usually composed and made fun of others, but it was only at that time she was embarrassed with Sharis and Tillfur teasing her.

And then, there was one more good thing.

「It will be bad for your body if you dress like that, Aruji-sama.」

Just when Lux came out to the courtyard for a diversion, Yoruka in her uniform called out to him.

She gently wrapped a wool muffler around his neck.

Each of her limbs was fixed with splint and she used a cane to walk. Her left eye was hidden by bandage but—even so she was showing her usual carefree smile.

「Thank you Yoruka. But you shouldn't force yourself to walk you know? You still have to rest for now.」

「It seems so. With this I also became unable to take part in guarding Aruji-」

sama alternately. Besides—it doesn't suit me as expected.]

「So, that is still continuing even now.....」

After Lux retorted with a wry smile, Yoruka slowly brought her face closer.

It looked painful how she was wrapped in bandages, even so her flushed cheek and smile were lovely enough. Lux's heart skipped a beat.

「Is it alright, if I ask a question?」

In the courtyard at winter where dead leaves were piled up, Yoruka let out a white breath while muttering.

「Aruji-sama said, that even a tool like me looks like a human for you wasn't it? But, as I thought I cannot think so.」

An innocence that was like a child surfaced from her, different from her usual bewitching and mysterious air.

「Even so that's fine. Because I'm satisfied just from being able to think so. After all at that time, when Yoruka controlled my Bahamut using Spell Code, it was something that cannot be done unless by a human.」

When Lux hesitated from seeing Lisha's figure, she immediately moved his body for him.

She couldn't possibly do that if she wasn't able to understand human feelings—or Lux's feelings at least.

「I think Yoruka surely won't believe me even if tell you something like this but—」

「No, I believe it.」

When Lux smiled wryly, Yoruka unexpectedly nodded easily and stared at Lux with an upward gaze.

「I don't believe myself, but I believe in Aruji-sama's judgement. That's why—there is one more thing that I want to confirm too at this occasion.」

「Ah, okay. If it's something that I can answer then you can ask me anything.」

Lux became pleased with Yoruka's positive question and he answered like that with a relieved smile.

At that instant, a soft and smooth sensation was pushed on the tip of Lux's lips like a surprise attack.



「——」

The time in the courtyard stopped.

It wasn't the plundering kiss that Yoruka had done several times until now.

It was a soft kiss where their lips only touched lightly.

The warmth and feeling that was entered into her body heatedly boiled up Lux's emotions.

「E, eerrrr, Yo, Yo-yo-yo-yo-Yoruka.....?」

Lux was bewildered while his cheeks were reddening. Yoruka slightly averted her eyes from him and muttered with a somewhat embarrassed look.

「Perhaps, I am completely in love with Aruji-sama. But, as you can see I don't understand my own self, so I also don't understand what I should do.」

Saying that, she smiled at him once more with an intoxicated expression.

This time it was while pushing her body closely on him with more passion than usual.

「That's why, I want Aruji-sama to teach me. What should I do to be able to love Aruji-sama, is it really correct like this, please thoroughly teach it into my heart and body.」

「U, a—!?」

Just when he thought that Yoruka was unusually meek, this time it was Lux's turn to be flustered.

This was bad.

Yoruka was poor or even completely unable in human interaction, but that made her fondness and request to him even purer in proportion to that. Lux's head was boiling up.

「I, I am also in the middle of studying in regard to that so-.....!?」

When Lux tried to gloss over in panic like that, Krulcifer, Celis, and also Lisha showed up from the building passage that connected to outside.

「As I thought, it was dangerous to be absent from the New Kingdom. To think

that the relationship between Lux-kun and her will progress so far until like this— And then for the princess to be completely useless.....」

「Tha, that's not permitted Lux! Tha, that kind of licentious act isn't allowed within the Academy's ground!」

Beside Celis who raised her voice in panic, Krulcifer sent her a conflicted gaze.

「Recently it feels like you are letting the cat out of the bag every time you talk but, well, it doesn't matter. More importantly, we have to talk firmly with her. About our 『pact』 until this battle is over—」

「.....Pact?」

Lux tilted his head. He somehow felt a bad premonition.

Krulcifer was smiling calmly, but if he was forced to say he felt a premonition of war.

「Please allow me to hear about that. After all it seems like it will be something that is really interesting for me.」

「Haa, actually this isn't the time to do something like this but, this is really troubling.」

「It's exactly because it's this kind of time. The feelings we are harboring is something like that right?」

Krulcifer who spoke mysteriously and Celis who looked really worried lent Yoruka their shoulder and led her away.

Lux ruminated how Yoruka was becoming one of them once more while looking up at the winter sky.

Two months remained until Sacred Eclipse destroyed the world.

The first new year's eve since Lux came to the Academy was approaching.

Part 2

Airi was looking down at the lively exchange between Lux and the girls from a corridor's window.

The sky that would begin to snow anytime now looked grey due to Airi's own mental state.

It felt like there would be deadly battles every month since her big brother came to the Academy, but this time too they were able to barely survive.

The Blue Tyrant, Singlen Shelbrit.

It seemed that person who they were the most on guard against wouldn't threaten Lux with the matter of Grand Force anymore.

Regarding that, he might have some kind of wicked scheme lying in wait, but for now they could do nothing but be alert of him.

Rather than that—something more terrifying was happening to Airi.

The reason she was able to return safely after she was captured by that Soffice—

—

「Put this Grand Force on the pedestal. The Moon will be liberated with that and all its functions will become usable.」

Soffice who took off her mask told Airi that with a bland expression.

That was the only instruction given to Airi in their dealing so that she would be returned safely.

But, she couldn't easily assent to it.

「I refuse. I don't know what your purpose is, but I have no intention at all to cooperate with you all.」

She hid her trembling and clearly said that, but Soffice's expression didn't change.

Airi held the short sword in her pocket and then when she resolved herself to stab it into her throat, 「Then, let's stop it.」

Soffice casually said that with an indifferent expression.

「Wai-, what are you saying Soffice! If we cannot liberate the Ruin, we won't be able to use its functions fully desu! If that happens our objective will be—」

「But that girl will commit suicide if we try to force her. If possible I don't want to kill a little sister. In the past inside that Garden, my important little sister—Uruk was tricked and torn limb from limb. I don't want to do the same thing like those traitors.」

「Haa, you are saying that after getting this far desu, Soffice is a troublesome person.」

The Automaton called Re Plica, who falsified her background as a Seven Dragon Paladin's aide, Uruk, made her mechanical fox ears droop down limply and sighed.

「You two, what are you—?」

Soffice turned around in response to Airi's bewildered muttering and looked at her.

She turned a pure and genuine gaze that was like crystal straight at Airi and opened her mouth quietly.

「There is a way to end this battle bloodlessly. Even though you might not be aware of it, but you are holding the key for that. The next time we call on you, I want you to comply with us. Until then, it's fine for you to not do anything. I won't mind even if you act hostile to us on the surface.」

「That's, what do you—?」

「It might be a betrayal for the New Kingdom for you. But, thinking about the world, this should be the best thing to do. If you can promise, then after putting in the Grand Force and liberating the Moon, I'll return you to your brother's side. I really hate 『the family of traitors』, but it's the best to return a little sister

to her family's side, that's why.....」

「.....」

「If you betray us later, I will activate the Moon's function—the ^{Bell of the Crazy Mc} Lunatic Call, gathering all the Abyss and Ragnarok and destroy the New Kingdom. Your big brother will naturally die. If you are fine with that, then you can refuse this deal.」

Soffice's expression looked lonely somewhere.

There was no guarantee that it wasn't an act to win over Airi, even so.

「.....I understand.」

Airi answered while apologizing to Lux and everyone in the New Kingdom in her heart.

「I will move following my contract with you all until Avalon is controlled.」

「For the time being, let me say thank you, descendant of the family of traitors.」

—

The words that Soffice said with a serious face kept remaining inside Airi's ears until now.

After installing the Grand Force in the control room at the Ruin's deepest part, they released Airi just as promised.

Airi intentionally didn't ask them, but she held a doubt about one point.

No, it was closer to a conviction rather than doubt.

(Sir Singlen made Nii-san liberate the Ruin at the Babel near Triport. And then, most likely it was Hayes who did it for the Ark and Gigas. Listelka installed the Grand Force inside the Dungeon.) And then, this time Airi performed the liberation using Grand Force.

The piling up of that strange coincidence hinted a single fact.

(Could it be, the liberation using Grand Force can only be done by the Arcadia family in the first place.....?) Backing up that fact, she was able to return safely from the Moon, but in exchange she formed just one contract with them.

「I want you to stay quiet about this matter. It's for your own sake, and also for your big brother.」

「.....There is no way, I can tell this to anyone.」

Airi stared outside the window while muttering to herself.

A criminal like herself betrayed the New Kingdom in order to survive.

If this fact came to light, the higher-ups would surely order Lux to give his service again.

Even though it would be better if she died rather than being a burden for Lux again.

「I have never imagined anything I have done to protect Airi to be painful. There is also nothing that I thought as painful or I regret doing for you. Just being able to protect my only important family makes me happy.」

Even now she couldn't forget her big brother's smile when telling her that.

That was why about this matter—Airi resolved to keep it a secret within herself, that she would comply with Soffice's demand when the time came.

Even if she had to turn her back on the New Kingdom, she wanted to live and stay at her big brother's side.

And then if it was just as Soffice said, that she could save the world, she wanted to do that and save Lux too.

「It will be the festival soon.」

The Holy Night Festival was approaching.

Along with the end of the world by Sacred Eclipse that would be in less than two months.

Afterword

Long time no see.

This is Akatsuki who recently start to think 『I have to do muscle training or diet!』 and carry it out.

It's finally Lux-kun who adorn the front cover please buy the eleventh volume, thank you very much!

Now then, the anime broadcast had been over too and two months had passed. Time sure fly.

However actually until today I don't even have time to reflect on myself and single-mindedly spent days of hard work.

Thinking back, it also felt like I feared standing still and continued to run all this time, but that too might be overdoing it that I am unable to see my surrounding instead.

How is my current self, and what about the surrounding.

Around today almost eight years has passed since I became an author, but it feels like the period for me to re-examine that once more has come.

Well, to tell the conclusion I also have the feeling of wanting to rest for a bit (laugh).

I won't take a break from writing as much as possible though.....!

And then this work to that can continue and develop until this far thanks to everyone, we will soon embark to the climax of Seven Dragon Paladins arc.

There are still several mountains remaining, but I will do my best so you all

will come along until the end.

—

Then to the thanks.

Kasuga Ayumu-sama who was in charge of this volume's illustrations too.

Thank you very much for the designs of new character and new Divine Drag-Ride even in the middle of your business.

The series will continue to develop with seriousness for a while after this, but as expected girl's ecch.....cute illustration is also attractive, so I also want to leave behind a scene where there will be that kind of illustration.

—

Well then, please treat well this work from here on too.

—

A certain day in October 2016 Akatsuki Senri

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Author

Akatsuki Senri (明月千里)

Residing in Ibaraki Prefecture (Currently in the middle of business trip in Tokyo)

Because of a little bit of circumstance, I ordered a custom made suit (got my size measured personally) for the first time in my life, but after several times I got scolded 「The body shape is different. You gained weight aren't you?」.

I'm thinking to work hard to lose weight.

—

Illustration

Kasuga Ayumu (春日 歩)

This is the illustrator.

I'm finally able to draw the main character Lux-kun as the front cover!